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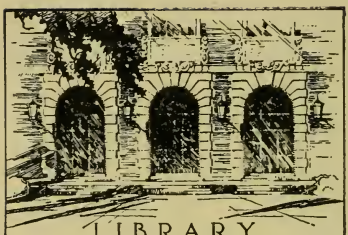

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ROSELLA,

OR

MODERN OCCURRENCES.

A NOVEL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

By Mary Charlton, Author of Phedora, &c.

VOL. I.

Dublin:

PRINTED FOR P. WOGAN—W. PORTER—AND T. BURNSIDE.

1800.

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ROSELLA.

CHAP. I.

Rage for Adventures.

MISS SOPHIA BEAUCLERC, a handſome young woman who poſſeſſed an independency, was the only child and reputed heireſs of a man of very reſpectable fortune, whoſe winter reſidence was in one of the faſhionable ſtreets at the weſt end of the metropolis. She was nearly of age—a period to her not at all deſirable, unleſs the previous interval of time were marked with ſome intereſting occurrences ſhe had in contemplation to facilitate, by ſuppreſſing a few ſuggeſtions of prudence, which occaſionally aroſe in ſpite of Lover, Novels, or Confidante.

Miſs Beauclerc had therefore conſented to meet a very good-natured, very thoughtleſs, very extravagant, very pleaſing, very well-made, very diſſipated young man at St. George's, Hanover-Square, where banns had been publiſhed in the names of each, with very little probability that the circumſtance ſhould reach the knowledge of the lady's parents; for though they were not people of high rank, they had ſufficiently practiſed the uſages of high life,

to diſmiſs every idea of attending the church of their London pariſh. Mr. Beauclerc had indeed enquired for a pew, becauſe, to poſſeſs a thing, and to uſe it, are diſtinct circumſtances; and a tolerably commodious one was moſt obſequiouſly offered him, at the reaſonable price of twelve guineas a year, and a douceur of five more for the favor of immediate attention—a favor which the gentleman as immediately declined receiving; but his Lady had the addreſs to profit by her huſband's economy, and adroitly placing her ſhare of a box at the Opera in oppoſition to a box at St. ———'s, attained her object by pleading for the one which was procured with the leaſt money.

Miſs Beauclerc had only one ſmall difficulty to encounter in keeping her appointment, which was compriſed in the ſingularity of walking out without an attendant, or getting rid of him when he had followed her two or three ſtreets, which ſhe thought the more eligible plan; and on the morning propoſed, ſhe ſent the footman who accompanied her, into a ſhop to make ſome enquiry which ſhe indicated, then very dexterouſly glided round a turning into another ſtreet, and was in the church before John could have given his meſſage, and received an anſwer; there, in a deep veil, which hid ſome very decorous bluſhes, and what was ſtill more convenient, the face they crimſoned, ſhe exchanged vows with Mr. Raymond, or as ſhe called him in her confidential correſpondence, her amiable and beloved Auguſtus; and whilſt in the veſtry he arranged the important buſineſs of ſeeing the clergyman and his ſatellites, which he performed with his accuſtomed liberality, the fair bride had leiſure to indulge

ſome

ſome very deep-drawn ſighs, and a copious ſhower of tears at the *raſh ſtep* which her paſſion for the moſt engaging and beſt of men, and the too well-known *obduracy* of her parents impelled her to commit, againſt the duty ſhe owed them.

The *beſt of men* caught a glimpſe of her ſtreaming ſorrows through the cloud that obſcured them, and experienced a keen pang of ſelf-abhorrence and reproach upon recollecting how well they would be founded, could ſhe but be ſenſible of a fatal event he had been vainly ſtruggling to drive from his memory, that he might appear upon this occaſion with tolerable compoſure at leaſt, if he could not attain that gaiety of aſpect, for which he was generally noted.

This circumſtance was merely an accidental inveſtment which the imprudent Raymond had made on the preceding night at a gaming-houſe, not only of every guinea he could command, but of ſeveral thouſand pounds he had no means of paying, but with the expected fortune of Miſs Beauclerc.

He did not riſe from the Faro-table until four in the morning; having for the laſt three hours called inceſſantly for bumpers of Burgundy to aſſiſt his judgment, and accelerate his better fortune: and then finding that every perſon declined his bets, he took the advice of one of his kind companions, and reeled to his lodgings, where he was put to bed by his ſervant, who had heard him mention whilſt he was dreſſing, that he had an appointment of *ſome conſequence* at ten the next day. From this intimation the man ventured to wake him at a quarter after nine, when Sophia's amiable and beloved Auguſtus ſtarted from his miſerable

ſlumbers with an aching head, nerves unſtrung, and a mind in which confuſion, hated recollection, torturing regret, irreſolution, and anguiſh warred with inconceivable tumult. In this mood, he twice walked forward with the determination of confeſſing the whole of his mad folly to Miſs Beauclerc, and decline, what he was certain ſhe ſhould even then perſiſt in, permitting her to ſhare the poverty and diſgrace into which he had plunged himſelf; but reluctant ſhame, and the dread of beholding the diſtreſs this avowal muſt occaſion, twice arreſted his ſteps, and he reſolved to write what he was convinced he had not the power to utter. As he was haſtening back to his lodgings the ſecond time, he happened, as he turned into Piccadilly, to caſt his eyes upon the dial of St. James's church, and ſaw that it was already conſiderably paſt ten. The ſituation of Sophia ſtruck upon his recollection like a flaſh of lightning, waiting in a ſuſpenſe too mortifying and diſtreſſing to admit of further deliberation on his part, and a third time he faced about to complete his evil deſtiny. In ſtriding up Sackville-Street with haſty and agitated ſteps, he remembered, for the firſt time, that he had not a guinea in his purſe, and with a half deſperate ſmile of ſelf-ridicule, he knocked at the door of a friend whoſe abode he paſſed, to borrow twenty pieces. This companion in diſſipation was at the breakfaſt table; and as Fortune had been as favourable to him the evening before as ſhe had been cruel to Raymond, the ſum in queſtion paſſed from the hands of one extravagant to the other with much facility: not but the lender had heard the whiſpered ruin of the borrower, but he happened to poſſeſs a heart which required a longer time in the ſchool of the

the world to harden, than that of a toniſh lounger uſually takes.

Raymond threw the money into his waiſtcoat pocket, ſhook the hand of his friend, and declaring that he was upon buſineſs of *ſome conſequence*, flew out of the houſe, and without admitting any more reflection, marched to his ſtation at the ſteps of the church, where however he arrived as ſoon as Sophia, who having read of the numberleſs accidents which haraſs the ſoul of a beautiful young creature, and impede her progreſs in adventures of this kind, did not think it expedient to be punctual to the time appointed.

Under theſe threatening auſpices were the ill-boding nuptials of Raymond performed. His bride, bidding him adieu before he quitted the church, tripped to the houſe of a viſiting acquaintance in a neighbouring ſtreet, as had been preconcerted, and complaining of an accident that had ſeparated her from her attendant, borrowed a ſervant to follow her home, where ſhe found John already arrived, to whom ſhe manifeſted great diſpleaſure for remaining ſo long in the ſhop, by which means, ſhe ſaid, he had not obſerved her turn into Brook-Street with her friends.

Sophia then withdrew to her dreſſing-room, exulting extremely at the charming perſpective that preſented itſelf, of a train of incidents moſt delightfully intereſting, and ſweetly romantic. She threw up her veil as ſhe walked to and fro before a large mirror; not from the ordinary vanity of admiring her face or figure, though they were both really engaging, but from the more elevated pleaſure of beholding *in propria perſona* a heroine in the bloom of youth, emerging into thoſe delightful, myſterious, and ſentimental

mental situations which so agreeably occupy the imagination, when viewed within the inclosure of a tremendous breadth of margin, and cased in a surtout of marbled paper, extremely soiled by the devotion of the curious.

Poor Raymond meantime, who was momentarily recovering from the confusion attending an intoxication not sufficiently slept off, was alive to the horrors of his fate, which the folly, the madness, and, in the eye of the world, the villany of his concealed marriage completed most effectually. He grinned with rage and despair, stalked about his apartment as if he meant to crush a giant at every step, and cursed himself alternately for a fool, a dolt, an idiot, and a scoundrel. At length, in spite of the energy of his anguish and regret, he began to feel extremely warm and exhausted with this unprofitable exercise; and having sketched in his distempered fancy a hasty plan of future conduct, he sat down to write a farewell letter to his unsuspecting bride, in which very little was to be understood but that he quitted her for ever because her generous confidence in his honor and the fascinating graces of her person had made a lasting impression on his heart; and finally, that being already a wretch beneath the regard of every honest man—sunk into the lowest pit of infamy, he left her because he could not endure in her eyes to be a villain. Having sealed up this eloquent, but very incomprehensible epistle, he dropped it into his pocket, with some papers relating to his deranged affairs, and walking to a coach stand, threw himself into a hack, and was carried by his directions to —— Street, the residence of Mr. Mordaunt, an upright man of the law, who had been one of his

his guardians, and had manifeſted an intereſt, almoſt paternal, in his welfare. To this honeſt man he unfolded a long tiſſue of imprudence and infatuated extravagance, ending in the unfortunate incidents of the preceding night, but carefully concealing the event of the morning. He had, when his fortune was little impaired, avowed to Mr. Beauclerc his admiration of his daughter, who in his rejection of ſuch a ſuitor, veiled an incorrigible reluctance to part with money under the anxious foreſight of a parent, and to the claims of poor Raymond oppoſed his well-known failings and follies. Piqued at the old man's too juſt repreſentations, he affected to continue his ſuit without ſeeking his approbation, till its full ſucceſs with Sophia taught him the prudence which alone could conciliate her father. But Mr. Beauclerc's prejudice and averſion were now too completely fixed to be removed by forbearance or ſubmiſſion, and the young people conſequently conſulted only their mutual prepoſſeſſion. Reymond knew that the fortune of Sophia would little more than ſatisfy the demands of his plunderers, and under circumſtances ſo aggravating to the feelings of her irritated father, from him they could hope nothing: when therefore he was ſilent on the ſubject of his marriage, his motive was not want of ingenuouſneſs, but a fear leſt in diſcloſing it, he ſhould cruſh his too confiding wife in the ruin that annihilated him.

Mr. Mordaunt heard his narrative with a ſteady look of concern, and prepared, at his requeſt, to make out a double liſt of debtor and creditor to the eſtate of Auguſtus Raymond, who, of fifty thouſand pounds bequeathed him by his father, contrived to point out to his ſilent hearer,

hearer, two thousand of the sum in the five per cents, and three hundred more in the hands of a banker, besides a few sums scattered as loans amongst his quondam friends and companions; a couple of saddle-horses at a livery stable, where they had stood till their master was indebted double the sum they were worth; and a curricle with a pair of bright bays not paid for, completed the list.

On the contra side of the account stood—Imprimis—To the Honorable Thomas Estcourt five thousand three hundred pounds—To Major Hangon four thousand—and to Lord Quye three thousand five hundred.—Lodgings for six months, eighty guineas.—The valet three months' wages, ten pounds ten.—Mr. Mordaunt uttered a peevish ejaculation.—The groom, the taylor, the mercer, the hatter, the boot-maker, the hosier, the shoe-maker, the perfumer.——"Fools! puppies!" exclaimed the old man in a rage he could no longer suppress, "contemptible madmen that you are! disgusted with your frivolous beings before you have well quitted your leading-strings, and affecting the apathy of sages before you have well attained the age of manhood—fixed, bent upon no earthly object but galloping on to ruin with all the frantic energy of hydrophobia! What is your aim—what is your end?—You know not; but you rush forward with fury to escape from yourselves, and woe be to the unwary whom evil Fortune places in your path!"

The wild impatience of Raymond was irritated by this effusion; he frowned, bit his lips, and dashed the papers which had occasioned it to the further corner of the room. Mr. Mordaunt

daunt took his hand as he seemed preparing to rush out of the house.

"Raymond," said he, "do you not suppose I am interested for your well-being?"

"Yes, yes," returned the young man; "have the compassion, however, not to demonstrate it at this moment by useless lectures."

He then declared that his intention was to quit England immediately, if the friendship of Mr. Mordaunt would induce him to undertake the arrangement of his desperate affairs, as far, at least, as they could be arranged.

Mr. Mordaunt argued and reasoned against precipitation with much perseverance; but at length finding that Raymond was deaf to persuasion, he offered to furnish him with recommendatory letters to some gentlemen he had formerly well known, who were at present high in the Council at Bombay. The young man eagerly caught at the proposal which soothed his sickening heart with the idea of leaving far behind him all those scenes of regretted dissipation in which his happiness had been wrecked, and of hiding himself for ever from his former associates, whose scorn or compassion he could not endure to be the object of. In the present state of his mind, every thing was to be done in a moment, every plan put in practice at the instant it was formed; and he urged Mr. Mordaunt to dispatch the promised letters without delay, as he meant to leave London before sunset.

The good man was startled by this declaration; but a moment of reflection determined him not to oppose it, and he promised that his credentials should be ready when he was prepared to demand them. Raymond then left him, proceeded in his hack to the India-House, to

endeavor to ſecure a paſſage in the firſt veſſel expected to ſail to Bombay, and found that the laſt ſhip taken up for that ſettlement, had left the Downs a fortnight back: he learned however that the purſer of an Indiaman bound for Madras, had juſt received his final diſpatches, and would ſet off for Portſmouth the next morning at daybreak. The letters of Mr. Mordaunt were totally forgotten—for Madras, Cochin-china, Peru, or the Coaſt of Africa were equally deſirable to him at that inſtant, and he determined to haſten to Portſmouth when he had packed up ſome baggage, and poſſeſſed himſelf of the three hundred pounds in the hands of his banker, to whoſe houſe he immediately drove, and received the money.

He was now obliged to return by appointment to Mr. Mordaunt, to execute a deed which inveſted him with the power of receiving the ſums due to him, and to liquidate as far as poſſible every demand upon him; and to this ſteady friend Raymond imparted his new deſtination. In vain did Mr. Mordaunt very gravely repreſent that recommendations addreſſed to people at Bombay, could be of little ſervice at Madras; ſtill however he would not withhold them, in the hope that they may be of ſervice on a future emergency.

Raymond, ſupported by the fever of his mind, then flew to his lodgings, where with indefatigable perſeverance, he aſſiſted his valet to put up ſuch of his effects as he thought neceſſary to take with him—a taſk he undertook both to haſten the man, and to drive reflection from himſelf.

His ſervant imagined he was accompanying a flying party upon ſome mad excurſion—a ſurmiſe

miſe that was ſtrengthened, when his maſter refuſed to let him ſtep to the laundreſs, to demand ſome linen ſhe ought to have brought home the day before; and he obeyed all the directions of Raymond without perceiving in his tumultuous hurry, any thing more extraordinary than unſubſided intoxication. A poſt-chaiſe was then ordered, part of the baggage attached to it, and the remainder diſpoſed in the inſide of the carriage. Raymond ordered it to ——— Street, telling his valet as he quitted him, to deſire the people of the houſe to apply for the money due to them, to Mr. Mordaunt, who would likewiſe diſcharge him and the groom. The fellow now, for the firſt time, gueſſed the ſituation of affairs, but was too much confounded by the ſudden intelligence, and was too well acquainted with the impetuoſity of his maſter, to give way to the inſolence he felt well diſpoſed to utter.

Mr. Mordaunt was at dinner when Raymond paid this final viſit; and as the unhappy young man equally loathed ſociety and food, he could not be prevailed upon to take a ſeat at the table, but left his chaiſe in waiting at the door, whilſt he walked into Oxford-Road to depoſit his letter to Sophia in the poſt, now that he was aſſured he ſhould have quitted London before ſhe could receive it. Shocked however on reflecting upon the ſudden anguiſh ſhe muſt experience at a communication ſo abrupt, his intention fluctuated; he again took poſſeſſion of a coach for the greater diſpatch, and ordered the man to haſten to Berwick-Street: the fellow required the number, and receiving two or three oaths for an anſwer, mounted his box with infinite celerity, and drove off at a full canter.

In Berwick-Street reſided the confidential friend of Sophia, who having acquired ſentiments equally romantic, and not being in a ſituation quite ſo elevated as that of Miſs Beauclerc, undertook, with equal pride and pleaſure, the taſk of forwarding the correſpondence of the lovers. A dangerous illneſs which had ſeized her mother, prevented her attendance at the ceremony of the morning; but Sophia had very kindly relieved the *ennui* of a ſick chamber (where no adventure could poſſibly be preſented to her by her better deſtiny, except in the guiſe of an *amant medicin*) by the precaution of diſpatching a billet to notify that the die was caſt, and her fate accompliſhed. When the bridegroom, therefore, appeared before her with a countenance portraying much of the anxiety and perturbation of his diſtracted mind, her ſilent ſuggeſtions allowed him time to inform her that his imprudence had undone him, that his fortune was annihilated, and himſelf an outcaſt. He entreated her to break the diſaſtrous tidings with tenderneſs to her friend, and when ſhe put the letter, he now produced, into her hand, to conjure her for her own ſake, never to think of him more. The confidante was for a moment thunderſtruck at this intelligence; but ſhortly recovering herſelf by a recollection of the charming, intereſting diſtreſſes all this muſt inevitably occaſion, ſhe very carefully treaſured in her memory what the ſelf-baniſhed wanderer incautiouſly uttered relating to his deſtination; and when he had wrung her hand, and bid her farewell, ſhe ſcarcely waited till the ſtreet-door had cloſed upon him, beforeſhe wrote to her *beloved* and *ill-fated* Sophia, abruptly informing her of her huſband's flight, and

and urging her to follow him without hesitation; which if she resolved heroically to do, this amiable and tender daughter proposed to leave all that was dear to her, that she might perform the *duties* of friendship in accompanying the interesting fugitive. When the epistle was dispatched, the confidante waited in great anxiety the effect of her prudent advice, now almost assured of its success, and now fearful that the timidity of Sophia would disconcert a step so essential to her adventurous career.

Raymond, little suspecting the mischief his tender precaution had endangered, hastened back to Mr. Mordaunt, who still entreated him to postpone his hasty journey for one day at least, that his departure might be rather better arranged; but finding both prayers and remonstrance vain, he sighed as he gave him his good wishes, intermixed with some sage advice, and saw him depart with a dejection of which Raymond more than partook, when he pressed his hand, and leaped into the chaise.

CHAP. II.

Rage for Adventures persisted in.

He arrived at Portsmouth without accident, having been compelled however to rest several hours upon the road, from a want of post-horses to carry him forward; so that his intention of travelling all night was frustrated, and it was rather late the following morning when he quitted

ted his laſt chaiſe at the Crown, whither the driver took him. Having refreſhed himſelf, with renewed impetuoſity he haſtened to a boat, and deſired to be rowed to the Indiaman. As the man leiſurely puſhed off, one of them made ſome enquiry, to which Raymond replied at random, and then ſunk into a deep reverie, from which he awoke at the expiration of two hours, to find that he had been taken to a foreign veſſel from Bengal. In an exceſſive ill humour he gave new directions, and at length found himſelf on board the —— Indiaman. Here he met with a freſh exerciſe of patience; the Captain had juſt gone on ſhore, and he was informed by the firſt mate that every birth was occupied, and not a nook left to ſwing another hammock, unleſs the commander would conſent to pare off a bit of his own cabin, which had already undergone an operation of the ſame kind. It was conjectured that the Captain would remain on ſhore till the arrival of the Purſer; and the Hotel he frequented was mentioned to Raymond, who declined an invitation to drink a bottle of wine in the cuddy, and was rowed back to Portſmouth in a moſt unenviable ſtate of mind, accompanied with an inveterate head-ach.

Almoſt deſpairing of ſucceeding in his application to the Captain, and exhauſted by fatigue and anxiety, a ſulky deſpondence ſupplied the place of the indefatigable exertions he had uſed: inſtead of ſeeking out the man who would inſtantly end his ſuſpenſe by granting or refuſing his requeſt, a dread leſt it ſhould terminate as he feared, made him reſolve to defer his enquiry, whilſt he took a ſolitary dinner, that he might not faint for nouriſhment rather than in obedience to the calls of hunger.

It

It was near seven in the evening when he threw himself into a clumsy old-fashioned couch, that ornamented the apartment to which he had been introduced; and whilst the people of the house prepared what he had ordered, unconscious of the lapse of time, he remained a prey to the most torturing reflections, till a more than usual bustle throughout the house awakened his attention; and starting up, he rung the bell with such violence, that the handle and part of the rope remained in his hand, unsustained by the broken wire; but no one answering the signal, he threw open the door of the apartment, and called to the waiters with a loud tone of angry impatience; yet had a legion obeyed the summons, poor Raymond would no longer have heeded them, for his whole attention and every faculty were engrossed by the figure of Sophia's confidante, who attracted by the well-known sound of his voice, issued from a neighbouring room, and beckoned to him in silent dignity to enter it. But a presage of the scene which there awaited him, and a full recollection of his delinquency, made him a coward, and his motion was rather retrograde, until the lady urged him forward, by exclaiming that her poor friend would expire if he persisted in deserting her. Miss Beauclerc, or rather Mrs. Raymond, had really fainted from fatigue and the agitation of her spirits, upon receiving, on entering the house, an answer to the enquiries she had till then vainly made, which revived her almost extinguished hopes.

The meeting was on either side very tender, and had not the confidante Miss Selina Swinney, been present to note down in the tablets of her memory every sentence that was uttered—every

entreaty

entreaty of forgiveneſs on one ſide, and promiſe of forgiveneſs on the other, neither Raymond nor Sophia would probably have recollected ſix words of a ſcene ſo intereſting.

The fugitive forgot for the preſent the purport of his journey: he removed his wife and her adventurous friend on the following day to the Iſle of Wight, and at their requeſt, went in ſearch of lodgings, where they might remain a week or two, with the leaſt chance of attracting the attention of travellers or inhabitants. He ſoon found ſome pretty apartments to be let, at a neat cottage-looking building, about half a mile from Steep-hill, in a ſituation too beautifully romantic however, to allow of the retirement he was conſcious would be prudent; but he was ſatisfied that it would delight Sophia, and that conſideration prevailed.

They removed to this little habitation the next day, and Raymond found that he had perfectly well conſulted the taſte of his fair wife, who was in raptures with her new dwelling. His own mind was far from being in a ſtate to reliſh the moſt attractive ſcenery, or the moſt ſublime forms that have ever decked the ſurface of the earth: the immenſe cliff, at the ſide of which the cottage appeared to cling, though it afforded the moſt rich and picturesque proſpects,—or the varying ocean that rolled beneath it, gave him no delight, while his heart reproached him with having clouded the fair perſpective of a proſperous and happy life, to which Miſs Beaucleric had appeared well entitled to look forward. He had not yet found courage to tell her the extent of his debts, or even that his property was reduced to the contents of his pocket book; and ſhe very naturally imagined that if he could be

be contented with such a retreat as chance had then conducted them to, which was a paradise to her enthusiastic mind, the interest of her fortune might almost, if not wholly, support them in it: in a few months she should be able to claim it;—what delightful satisfaction did she not promise herself, when she could present it to him, and bid him forget the past!

At the expiration of a few days, Miss Swinney began to feel weary of her situation, in spite of her ardent fidelity, and the charm of being confidante to such an amiable and unfortunate pair. Mrs. Raymond had now another object of everlasting and unalterable affection, and poor Selina missed those strings of kind epithets and professions of fervent friendship she had been accustomed to receive from her. The ungrateful Augustus too, no longer treated her with that delicate attention and brotherly regard which had formerly rendered her his strenuous advocate: on the contrary, when Sophia was not present, he invariably sunk into a gloomy reverie, and sometimes so far forgot himself, as to suffer exclamations of regret and despair to escape him: nay, when she reminded him of her critical and well-timed interference to prevent his cruel banishment from the bosom of love and friendship, he cursed this boasted interference with vehement execration, and said it had rendered him a miserable, abject, and dishonored wretch.

All this was very strange to the gentle Selina, who conjectured, and fancied, and feared, and trembled at the dubious fate of her charming friend. But as Raymond invariably struggled against his secret chagrin and anxiety in the presence of his wife, and not only seemed, but really

really was so much attached to her, Miss Swinney left to time and circumstance to unravel the dark emotions of the *mysterious* Augustus, and sat down well satisfied with the efforts she had made to conduct him and Sophia to the greatest of all sublunary good, which she believed to consist of a mutual attachment, within the romantic walls of a charming cottage;—they had likewise a magnificent prospect of mountains ending in grey hills and blue mists, occasionally irradiated by a pale and majestic moon, whose beams *might* serve to throw a light upon the broad shoulders and awkward gait of some sheep-stealer, or hen-roost stripper, whom imagination *might*, upon an emergency, convert into the leader of Banditti; and finally, the dashing of impetuous waves to regale at once the eye and ear.

With such desirable objects before her, had Miss Selina been blessed with two or three tender lovers, she would have thought little of her sick mother, whose hand she had kissed with great energy the night she had been impelled by sacred friendship to desert her; and twice, after she had quitted the good lady's apartment, she turned back to water it with tears. After the due observance of these customary ceremonies, she felt her compunction considerably abated, and fulfilled the generous purposes of her soul with great composure. Mrs. Raymond, on the contrary, in spite of the romantic enthusiasm of her sentiments the persuasions of her adviser, and her anxiety to prevent the purposed emigration of her husband, could scarcely be induced to quit the house of her father clandestinely; and after a residence of a week in the Isle of Wight, her remorse was highly stimulated upon reading the

the following advertiſement in the newſpaper Mr. Raymond took in.

" ELOPEMENT.

" Whereas a young lady has lately deſerted the roof of her unhappy parents, as they ſuppoſe from an attachment they appeared to diſcourage, they are induced thus to ſolicit her return to her home, where ſhe will be received with kindneſs and indulgence. If the young lady will write a few lines to her mother, ſhould ſhe not be willing to rely wholly upon this declaration, it will much relieve the anxiety and affliction that has been, and is ſtill experienced. The companion of her flight will be likewiſe forgiven by her relations, ſhould her perſuaſions prevail with her friend to comply with the earneſt entreaty of her parents, who will not fail to acknowledge the benefit ſhe will have then conferred upon them."

Sophia read theſe lines with great emotion, and pointing them out to her huſband, watched his countenance whilſt he haſtily ran them over: he changed color twice, and made no immediate reply.

" This is more than I had dared to hope," ſaid Mrs. Raymond timidly, after a ſhort pauſe: " Dear Auguſtus, will you not ſuffer me to avail myſelf of ſuch kind conceſſions?"

" You are not certain," replied he, in painful confuſion, " that you are the perſon meant by this advertiſement."

" Oh

" Oh yes, yes, I am quite certain that it can be no other."

" I have no doubt of it," cried Miſs Swinney, who had been reading the paragraph two or three times with great attention; " but I cannot divine what acknowledgment your father alludes to, my dear friend, unleſs indeed Mrs. Beauclerc means to adopt me inſtead of her darling Sophia, who will now, ſhe muſt neceſſarily think, reſide with her huſband: and you know, Sophy, this would be a very natural plan, as you and I are ſo congenial in ſentiment and diſpoſition; for it muſt needs be a great conſolation to your tender mamma, to converſe daily with one who flatters herſelf ſhe is the counterpart of her daughter."

Raymond, who was walking haſtily up and down the room, was ſtrongly tempted to diſpute this aſſertion; but the tears of his wife, who ſoftly ejaculated, " My poor mother!" now claimed all his attention.

" Sophy," cried he, " I am diſtreſſed, Heaven knows how much, that I cannot fulfil the expectations this advertiſement has raiſed in your affectionate boſom! I told you that I was an undone wretch, but I did not tell you all:—it is impoſſible that I can appear in the world; ſituated as I am, I would not again enter London for what the whole univerſe could offer me."

Mrs. Raymond was ſhocked: his vehemence had ſtartled her, and ſhe wept bitterly.

" But," continued he, " I am not ſuch a villain as deliberately to drag you into the ruin I have brought upon myſelf: return to your father's houſe, where an affectionate welcome awaits you; tell him you have married a beggar,

gar, who has too much pride to owe his subsistence to the bounty of a man who rejected his alliance in a situation of comparative affluence; and if future circumstances will allow it, preserve your unhappy connection with me a secret from the world, and endeavour to forget it yourself."

"Do you cast me off?" exclaimed she in an agony: "if you are a beggar, so am I—I ask no better fate than you must experience: I wish for no greater happiness or higher fortune than to share your destiny! Suffer me only to write to my mother to beg her forgiveness for having left her so precipitately."

"I am not barbarian enough to refuse it," returned he: "yet, dearest Sophy, let me conjure you to adopt my plan, and do not believe for a moment that I would consent to part with you without being compelled by a dreadful necessity. Do not write by this post; perhaps I may acquire courage to inform you of the extent of my imprudence—worse than imprudence—it was ingratitude and dishonor when you had committed your happiness to my care!"

"What do you mean?" she asked in great alarm.

"Don't question me now," cried he, in an accent of impatience; "perhaps I may shortly tell you all—at present I cannot—I am greatly disordered, my head throbs to distraction—I must try if the air will relieve me."

Before Mrs. Raymond could reply, he flew out of the house. Miss Swinney, who had been a very attentive observer of this enchanting scene, and had almost enjoyed the interesting distress and unfeigned misery of either party, now thought proper to console her weeping friend, declaring

declaring at the same time, that she had never beheld any thing so gracefully pathetic. "I am convinced, my beloved Sophia," continued she, "that you were born to shine in adversity: no —I never yet saw anguish so delightfully attractive! You are quite a heroine—don't wish, my dear, to be a happier one, for distress quite becomes you: so be comforted, my dearest friend; I am sure your adventures are infinitely interesting!"

"Ah, Selina," interrupted Mrs. Raymond, "I cannot find the charm in what we used to call adventures, which I had foolishly promised myself; and I would forego them all, to find myself established in my father's house, and poor Augustus high in his favor, and reconciled to himself."

Miss Swinney reprobated such tame degenerate sentiments, and after a few anxious conjectures from her friend, concerning the nature of the confession Raymond had promised to make, and some expressions of solicitude for his indisposition, they sauntered into a small garden adjoining the house. From this spot the eye could wander over the country to a considerable distance on the one side, and had only the ocean and the horizon for a boundary on the other. Miss Swinney seated herself in the attitude of a pensive heroine, on a bench the former inmates of the house had erected; and Sophia took two or three thoughtful turns to the extent of the enclosure, her mind still occupied by the intended discovery of her husband, who in an hour was seen half way up the cliff on his return home. His appearance did not denote great cheerfulness, but he seemed much more composed than when he had quitted her, and she was only restrained

ſtrained from flying to meet him by the fear of being importunate. His approach was much retarded by the winding of the road, interſected here and there by a croſs path; and as her eyes followed the figure of Raymond, which was ſometimes obſcured at a ſudden angle by a fence of bloſſoming myrtle, ſhe obſerved a party of gentlemen on horſeback, taking the bridle way to ſome pleaſure grounds ſurrounding a neighbouring ſeat.

Raymond did not regard them, till a loud halloo, followed by his own name moſt audibly pronounced, effectually awakened his attention. Sophia ſaw him ſtart with great apparent emotion, and ſhe fancied too, that ſhe beheld the color forſake his cheeks, and eagerly endeavoured to catch the accents ſhe indiſtinctly heard as they floated on the breeze. Raymond ſpoke with geſtures of violent agitation, and her boſom beat with redoubled alarm. He had ſaid that the univerſe ſhould not tempt him to approach the metropolis—"Perhaps," thought Sophia, "theſe men are from thence, and the meeting a moſt unpleaſant one."

The event but too well juſtified this ſuppoſition; for almoſt at the moment it was formed, Raymond levelled a blow at one of the party, that threw him from his horſe: terror prevented her from diſcerning any thing further, and the ſhriek it extorted from her, brought Miſs Swinney to her aſſiſtance, as ſhe was ſinking to the earth; but whilſt her arms ſupported poor Sophia, her tongue added to the anguiſh and horror ſhe experienced.

"Oh my God!" exclaimed ſhe, "is Raymond mad? He is ſtruggling with four or five men!—Lord, I hope they are not Bailiffs!"

"Bailiffs!"

"Bailiffs!" repeated Sophia, in a faint accent.

"Oh no," resumed her inconsiderate companion, "I see now they have the appearance of men of fashion. Good Heavens! he will certainly have twenty affairs of honor upon his hands.—What will become of us!"

"Which way did he go?" cried Mrs Raymond, starting wildly, "I will follow him!"

Certainly," rejoined Miss Selina in a quick accent, "we ought to follow them; perhaps the adventure will not prove at the denouement so unpleasant—at least I am sure it must be interesting."

Sophia was already at a little gate that opened into the public path, which she flew down with such incautious swiftness, that a loose pebble rolling under her foot, twisted her ancle so violently, that she fainted with pain and sickness. Miss Swinney, whose form was not so light as that of her fair friend, and whose mind was far from being stimulated with the same anxious eagerness, had not moved with such celerity, and was at some distance when the accident happened; so that it was wholly attributed to excess of fine feeling, and the agony of a strained ancle not even suspected to have any share in the catastrophe.

The gentle Selina seated herself, therefore, by the side of the prostrate sufferer, and pronounced a soliloquy so moving, that it brought the tears into her own eyes: the more lovely ones of Sophia opened ere it was entirely ended, and scarcely knowing what she said, she entreated that a messenger be dispatched to Raymond, to implore his immediate return.

When Miss Swinney discovered that she was unable to move, she sent a girl who had approached

ed from curiosity, to desire assistance from their lodgings; but in answer to the request of her friend, professed that she knew not which way Raymond had taken. A man and woman servant, who had been hired since their residence in the island, ran hastily to the place on receiving the summons, and with their assistance Sophia was conveyed to her habitation, from whence a medical person was sent for.

The confinement thus procured by her anxiety and impatience, was insupportable to her, whilst she remained ignorant of the fate of her imprudent and hasty-tempered Raymond. She had dispatched different people in search of him, who returned without any intelligence, and at midnight he was still absent.

Miss Swinney, in spite of her wishes to atchieve something sublime at a crisis so momentous, could not but be extremely touched at the watchful uneasiness of her friend, and sat by her bed-side talking of patience and composure, till poor Sophia, wearied almost beyond endurance, was tempted to quarrel with her, as well as with the unlucky destiny that pursued her.

At daybreak the invalid was extremely feverish, and the apothecary again sent for, who practised the usual ceremonies in such a case, and promised to compose a febrifuge that would perform wonders. The ancle was found to be quite discolored and extremely swelled, and Mrs. Raymond was wholly unable to endure the most trifling motion: but her agitation of mind was yet infinitely more painful; the epithets of barbarous, inhuman, and savage were levelled without œconomy at her husband by the gentle Selina, and again was every creature round the

place, of whatever age or ſex, diſperſed in ſearch of him.

At about nine in the morning he made his appearance, and Miſs Swinney, who ran out to meet him, was ſhocked at his wild and haggard looks.

"They tell me," ſaid he, "that my poor Sophy is dangerouſly ill—that ſhe has fallen, and is much hurt; nothing, I think, but ſuch intelligence could have again brought me here."

"Good God!" exclaimed Selina, "ſurely you could not have meditated to deſert her! Where have you been?"

"In hell," replied he, fiercely, "a hell I might have eſcaped, had you not perſuaded that dear unfortunate girl to follow me hither!"

He then flew paſt her, and entered the chamber of Sophia; his countenance was now rather fluſhed, and no longer appeared ſo terrific; and as ſhe was aſſured of his ſafety, his preſence conſiderably calmed her inquietude. He evaded giving any account of himſelf until ſhe had taken ſome reſt, which the ſervants had informed him ſhe had paſſed the night without: and Sophia, ſoothed by the affection he evinced, ſoon ſunk into a refreſhing ſlumber. Raymond then no longer retained the ſmall appearance of compoſure he had aſſumed, but gave himſelf up to the emotions that overpowered him, whilſt Miſs Swinney watched him with increaſing apprehenſion and curioſity.

At length he left the room in an agony, and ſhe haſtily followed him in defiance of his reproaches, which ſhe began very ſeriouſly to dread would be her portion from every party. Raymond had thrown himſelf on a chair, where ſhe found him agitated by contending paſſions, every muſcle

muſcle of his face convulſed, and the whole countenance ſuffuſed with a deep crimſon. Alarmed at the ſpectacle he exhibited, ſhe burſt into tears; and when he took her hand, and begged her forgiveneſs of any haſty expreſſion he might have uſed in his anxiety and diſtreſs, ſhe found that he was burning with fever. This diſcovery completed her terror, and her queſtions, tears, and commiſeration produced a confeſſion from Raymond that he had been inſulted and challenged by a gentleman he had unexpectedly met the day before, whom he had, about an hour back, ſeverely, but not dangerouſly, wounded in the rencontre that enſued: he then conjured her to keep the circumſtance from the knowledge of Sophia, which ſhe promiſed, and in return entreated him to retire to an apartment which ſhould inſtantly be prepared for him, that he might endeavour to repoſe; but this he peremptorily refuſed, alledging as a reaſon, that Mr. Eſtcourt, his friend, who had only the week before purchaſed a villa not half a mile diſtant, had extorted from him a promiſe to return and dine; and that it was moſt eſſential to his welfare not to diſappoint his expectation: but as he was diſtreſſed to leave Sophia ſo much indiſpoſed, he would overcome every obſtacle, and be at home early in the evening.

Miſs Swinney obſerved to him that it was yet only eleven o'clock.

"Is it ſo early?" exclaimed he, much ſurpriſed: "I will go immediately then, and ſettle ſome buſineſs I have to tranſact with him; perhaps he may releaſe me from my engagement, and I ſhall then return before Sophia miſſes me."

Without waiting for a reply, he left the houſe, and haſtened to that of Mr. Eſtcourt, who had

come down but two days before with ſome of his aſſociates to view his purchaſe. Major Hangon was of the party, and in their ride the preceding morning, had recognized Raymond in a manner neither tinctured with good-will, or even common civility. The unpaid debt of honor aſſailed the recollection of the fugitive, and ſhocked his pride; his anſwer was therefore dictated by his feelings, and partook of the diſdain and contempt with which at that moment he viewed himſelf. The retort was too galling to be endured, and produced the fury which had urged Raymond to treat the Major with a violence not to be overlooked. Mr. Eſtcourt had endeavoured to divert the coming ſtorm; but the perſonal inſult rendering all interference vain, it was agreed that the parties ſhould defer the meeting they both eagerly ſought, until the next morning. Raymond, unable to return to his wife, withdrew to a houſe of public reſort, where he employed the remainder of the day and the whole of the enſuing night in writing letters, which he carefully ſealed and directed, and depoſited them in his pocket-book, that if he fell in the conteſt, they might not be overlooked. At length the hour of rendezvous arrived, and Raymond haſtened to a retired part of Mr. Eſtcourt's grounds, which had been previouſly marked out to him. Hangon was wounded in the breaſt, and his opponent immediately deſired a moment of private converſation with Mr. Eſtcourt, to whom he lamented his inability to diſcharge the debt due to him, and referred him to Mr. Mordaunt, as the perſon in whoſe hands his affairs were placed. Eſtcourt interrupted him with a declaration that he ſhould never apply to the old fellow for a ſhilling, and deſired, with great

great appearance of generosity, that the subject might never more be mentioned, unless Raymond should at any future time amply possess the power of liquidating the debt, and he find himself in a situation to want it. "When that is the case, my good fellow," continued he, "when you are at the top of the wheel, and I at the bottom, I shall very freely remind you of our agreement: until that moment we will talk no more of it.—Stay, I have thought—suppose I pay Quye, and this sordid fellow Hangon, that you may come among us again."

Raymond rejected this uncommon proposition with warmth, as he had not the power, he said, of requiting such friendship, or even reimbursing the money.

"Oh, damn the money!" returned the other; "this plan, or some other like it, must do."

Raymond still however had fortitude to refuse his concurrence to this disinterested urgency, and Estcourt as firmly refused to take his negative.

"You shall dine with me," said he; "we shall be alone, and we will discuss the subject."

In short, he was not suffered to leave the house until he had promised to return at the dinner hour; he then wandered back to the place where he had passed the night, and on his way learned the accident and indisposition of Sophia, which overwhelmed him with still keener anxiety and remorse.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Rage for adventures rather abated.

WHEN Raymond left Miſs Swinney, to keep his appointment, ſhe returned to the chamber of her friend to watch by her; for Sophia had not yet awakened from the well-timed ſleep into which ſhe had fallen, and the gentle Selina taking from her pocket a new Novel which ſhe had had the precaution to pack up with the clothes ſhe had brought from home, entered into all the ſublimity of pale moons, blue miſts, gliding figures, hollow ſighs, ſhaking tapeſtry, reverberating voices, nodding pictures, long corredors, deſerted weſt towers, north towers, and ſouth towers, ruined chapels, ſuſpicious vaults, damp charnel-houſes, great clocks ſtriking twelve, wood embers expiring, dying lamps, and total darkneſs.

So much was the imagination of the romantic Miſs Swinney occupied by ſo brilliant a ſucceſſion of intereſting ſubjects, that ſhe forgot the flight of time: and had not Mrs. Raymond's maid entered to enquire where ſhe choſe to have the cloth laid for her dinner, ſhe would not have recollected that it was rather neceſſary to eat, to enable people to gaze with rapture upon fine proſpects, which fade terribly upon the eye that is longing to fix upon a loaf of brown bread with

the

the homely accompaniments of ale and cheese, for the lack of better cheer.

The short conversation that passed, though uttered in a low voice, awakened the invalid, who asked if Raymond were in the room, and receiving a negative from Miss Swinney, enquired if he had gone out. The woman replied that he had come home about an hour back, to dress, and hearing that her Lady was sleeping, would not suffer her to be disturbed, but left word that he was unavoidably engaged to dine out, and should return early.

Sophia endeavoured to be satisfied with this intimation: the repose she had taken had much refreshed her, her feverish symptoms had disappeared, and she begged her friend would send up her dinner from the eating-room. When it was announced to be ready, the gentle Selina descended, and sat down to table with a mind entirely divided between the situation of her imprudent, but interesting companions, and the situation of the still more imprudent heroine, the second volume of whose captivating adventures she had popped into her pocket to supply to her the absence of Raymond and Sophia. Having attended to Mrs. Raymond's wish respecting her share of the repast, she dismissed the servant, and read and ate by turns, till at length she was surprised, on looking at her watch, to find that she had remained nearly two hours with the dinner before her. She therefore rung to have it removed, and with the fascinating book still in her hand, walked with great dignity to the sitting-room, that she might, undisturbed, descend with her heroine down some very dark and broken stairs, which communicated with the young lady's bed chamber by

by a ſupernumerary door ſhe generally found open in the morning: a circumſtance of ſuch myſterious yet ſtriking import engroſſed every feeling of Miſs Swinney's heart, and ſhe reſolved to finiſh the chapter before ſhe aſcended to her ſick friend. This humane intention was however prevented by the appearance of a very faſhionable looking ſtranger, who without much ceremony entered the room from a faſhed door that opened into the garden.

The fair reader looked up, and the fictitious heroine vaniſhed from her imagination, to give place to the heroic Selina, thus on the point, ſhe fondly hoped, of commencing her own career of adventures. The intruder wore an air of ton, and expreſſed himſelf with elegance, that is, he was not troubled with any embarraſſment in introducing himſelf to his admiring auditor; and in the explanation he condeſcended to give, he uttered, par hazard, the moſt brilliant and novel terms and methods of arranging ſentences which had been gathered from the fineſt ſpeeches in the very laſt Seſſion of Parliament, and the moſt florid harangues at the bar, daſhed with an occaſional cant phraſe or expreſſion, picked up God knows where.

Miſs Selina on her ſide, imagined that ſhe liſtened to him with blended dignity and ſoftneſs; that the majeſty of conſcious virtue was meliorated by the bluſhes of modeſty: that her mien was ſo engaging that it invited love and admiration, whilſt it repelled every idea which was not conſonant with the moſt profound and pure reſpect and veneration—in ſhort, that ſhe poſſeſſed every magnetic and repellent grace, which always belong to heroines of the firſt claſs.

She

She was not indeed so wholly occupied by these reflections as not to understand, from the avowal of her visiter, that his name was Estcourt, and a sudden fear struck her that all was not right with Raymond; but the apprehension vanished with equal promptitude, amidst a train of the most seducing expectations, which the adulation of the gentleman produced. He told her that her irresistible beauty, joined to the charming generosity, fortitude, and good sense her aspect denoted, perfectly well announced her to him.

"My friend," added Mr. Estcourt, "is well justified in having so suddenly abandoned his former associates for such fascination: for my own part, I find it already but too *obtaining*. But I will not *commit myself*, and incur your displeasure, by laying my envy open to your observation. I presented myself here merely to inform you that Raymond found himself indisposed soon after dinner, and I would not suffer him to walk home till he had dissipated his head-ach by repose: so I stole hither myself to adjust any uneasiness you might suffer from his absence."

During this harangue, Miss Swinney gave the rein to the most animated and but ill-suppressed delight, which her conception of his meaning created in her romantic mind: she had no suspicion that she was mistaken for Mrs. Raymond, but imagined that the friend who had given up all his former associates for so much fascination, was some secret swain who was perfectly contented to keep himself *incognito*, and to feed his moon-light love with walking round the house she occupied, alone, at midnight, stretching out his arms towards her window, and catching a glimpse of her shadow as she approached it; a

piece of good fortune he might very probably often have enjoyed, as the gentle Selina always chose that hour to indulge her most pleasing reveries, in imitation of some very illustrious patterns; nor did she fail to loosen her long tresses, both those which had originally grown upon her own head, and those which had grown upon the heads of other people, and become her's by purchase.—With her loose tresses therefore, flowing over her shoulders, and a loose white robe flowing round her person, Miss Swinney was want to fix herself near her window, which she threw up to enjoy the cool breeze; and having forgot herself in the enthusiasm of her ideas, would often stand an hour, with hands folded over her bosom, and her eyes cast up, till at length, no form being seen to issue from behind any thicket, or glide from under any plane-tree, she recovered her recollection, and shut her window, as other heroines do, almost perished with cold.

She was extremely eager to learn who this gentle love-lorn shepherd was; but to enquire would have been the height of indecorum, and she settled in the exultation of her triumph, that he was not to be the successful swain by half a dozen at least. Her imagination had already carried her amidst cloud-capped hills covered with lofty pines, and gorgeous palaces, where amidst ranges of massy pillars stood dozens of lamps, all of them on silver tripods, and each so disposed as to cast a picturesque light upon some statue of exquisite workmanship.

The similarity of her own hastily imagined adventures, to those of which she had been reading but a few minutes before, made her cast her eyes upon the book that still remained in her hand;

hand; and almoſt unconſcious of what ſhe did, ſhe drew from her pocket a card, and placed it in the volume, to mark the page at which ſhe had been interrupted. Eſtcourt remarked the circumſtance, and taking up the book, opened it in a careleſs way, and read the ticket, which contained her own name and addreſs. His curioſity did not eſcape the vigilance of the lady, and ſhe inſtantly concluded that the *faſcinated friend* would profit by the diſcovery, had not his own diligent and eager enquiries already foreſtalled it.

Mr. Eſtcourt in a few minutes departed, and Selina, in a flutter of ſpirits, reviewed all that had paſſed: her viſiter had mentioned his envy of the unknown ſwain, which at firſt rather puzzled her, but ſhe recollected almoſt inſtantly that he had himſelf almoſt avowed his love, and as this paſſion is invariably accompanied by jealouſy, it was quite natural that Mr. Eſtcourt ſhould deſpond, and ſuſpect a rival of ſuperior good fortune.

In ſhort, the lady had now fallen into ſuch a train of thinking, that it is impoſſible to ſay where her ſurmiſes would have ended, had not Mrs. Raymond's bell made her recollect that ſuch a perſon exiſted. Aſhamed of having neglected her ſo long, ſhe flew up ſtairs, and replied to a half-grave, half-jeſting rebuke from the invalid, with the moſt animated and enthuſiaſtic expreſſions of eternal friendſhip; and was proceeding to inform her of the viſiter who had unexpectedly detained her below, when Sophia's maid entered to announce the return of her maſter, who almoſt immediately followed her into the room.

Mrs.

Mrs. Raymond, who had been very anxious to see him, was shocked at his appearance; for his countenance was extremely flushed, his eyes heavy, and his gait unsteady: yet she had no other suspicion than that he had been prevailed upon to circulate the bottle too freely at Mr. Estcourt's table.

After some affectionate and solicitous enquiries into the situation of Sophia, he declared himself rather indisposed, and withdrew to the apartment prepared for him, making a sign as he left that of his wife, that Miss Swinney should follow him; and as she fully expected some tender remembrance either from her lately known, or her unknown admirer, she eagerly obeyed the intimation.

Before they had time to descend the stairs, her patience was exhausted, and she demanded what embassy he was charged with.

"Embassy!" repeated Raymond, "I cannot understand you; but I perceive that you, as well as Sophia, suppose me to be in a state of intoxication. You are mistaken; but I do not wish her to be undeceived at present, lest her consequent anxiety should procure a return of fever. I was ill in the morning, but could not resist the pressing invitation of Estcourt, who is," he added vehemently, "the most generous and disinterested of men! such hearts as his the world is far from abounding with. I endeavoured while with him, to conceal my indisposition; but the effort was a vain one, and he insisted, before we transacted the business for which we had met, that I should try to procure an hour's repose, which he well knew I had neither leisure nor inclination to attempt last night.—Believe me, Selina, instead of having passed the afternoon

noon as you ſuſpect, I have ſpent the laſt four hours in an agony of mind and body, ſociety, inſtead of alleviating, would have increaſed. Do not mention this to Sophia; continue your generous attentions to her, I beſeech you; and when the apothecary calls, let him ſtep to me when he has ſeen her."

Miſs Swinney aſſented, and Raymond, quite exhauſted, haſtened to his chamber.

Sophia ſtill continuing in her error, was ſatisfied on hearing ſome time after that he was in a ſound ſleep—a report which he deſired might be made to her; but in fact he was too ill to quit his bed, and when the medical perſon ſaw him, who attended Mrs. Raymond, he appeared to think his indiſpoſition attended with conſiderable danger. The following morning juſtified his apprehenſions, and he deſired that more attendance might be called in. The patient had loſt blood on the preceding evening, and the apothecary thought it neceſſary that the operation ſhould be immediately repeated; but the effect was not ſo ſatisfactory as he had expected.

Miſs Swinney, completely frightened from her heroiſm, readily attended to the hint of obtaining the opinion of a Phyſician, which ſhe begged Mr. Aſtell would procure: ſhe juſt retained recollection enough to deſire the ſervants would agree with her in telling Mrs Raymond that their maſter had been compelled to hurry to Portſmouth before ſhe awoke, and had deſired her to be informed that buſineſs of the utmoſt importance would detain him, he feared, ſeveral days.

She then flew to the chamber of poor Raymond, both to ſee that he was properly attended, and to induce him if poſſible, to write a line

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in confirmation of the excuſe ſhe had invented, to quiet Sophia's apprehenſions. She found him however, raving in a ſtrong delirium, in which he had almoſt overpowerd his ſervant and the apothecary, who had been obliged to call in the man of the houſe to his aid.

Miſs Swinney beheld his outrageous ſtruggles with horror; and fearing that the loud exclamations and threats of vengeance which accompanied them, would reach the ears of Sophia, felt at once all the anxious miſery of her ſituation, conſcious as ſhe could not help feeling that her advice and perſuaſions had dragged her friend from the peaceable roof of her parents, and endangered the life of the unfortunate huſband. A man on horſeback had been diſpatched to Cowes for a London Phyſician of eminence who happened to be there; and as he was not expected for ſome time, the terrified Selina was obliged to quiet her impatience to learn what his fiat would be, and endeavour to compoſe her countenance, to lull the ſuſpicions of Mrs. Raymond, whilſt ſhe told the preconcerted tale: and ſo well had ſhe practiſed the art of throwing her features into every form caprice had dictated, that ſhe ſucceeded tolerably in the effort. Sophia was far from being at eaſe however, reſpecting her huſband, whoſe promiſed confeſſion, whoſe reluctance to ſuffer her to write to her mother, and ſubſequent conduct, tormented her recollection, and rendered her ſuſpicious.

At length the Phyſician arrived; and Miſs Swinney followed him into the chamber of poor Raymond, with all the real tremor of ſuſpenſive terror ſhe had often aſſumed on much leſs important occaſions. His ſenſe of the danger of his

his patient even exceeded that of Mr. Aſtell. The diſorder was a violent inflammatory fever; and ſhort as the period was, Selina learned that the following day would moſt probably determine the fate of this unhappy young man, whoſe wild unconſcious ejaculations accuſed her of having murdered him. The phyſician obſerving her conſternation, and having heard the aggravating circumſtance of Mrs. Raymond's indiſpoſition, adviſed her, after a preliminary apology for the freedom he was taking, to write immediately to the natural friends of the young couple that their preſence might lighten the anxious taſk which had ſo unexpectedly fallen to her, and that they might be ſatisfied, if the criſis ſhould be what he feared, that every advice and attendance which their own ſolicitude would have pointed out, had been procured for the benefit of the patient.

The urgent gravity of the Doctor co-operated with her own reflections to urge her compliance with this advice, and ſhe immediately wrote to Mr. Beauclerc encloſing the note in a letter to her father, imploring his forgiveneſs for herſelf, and conjuring him to forward the lines to Mr. Beauclerc, which ſhe left unſealed for his peruſal, ſhould he not be in town.

The Phyſician took the charge of the packet, which he conſiderately promiſed to ſend inſtantly to Portſmouth, and to procure it to be diſpatched by an expreſs the ſame afternoon. He would return, he ſaid, early the next morning, to ſee what further could be done for the invalid, and having conferred with Mr. Aſtell in private, haſtened away.

The apothecary at her earneſt interceſſion, remained with poor Raymond the whole night,

attended

attended by both the ſervants; and as the chamber of the patient was only ſeparated from that of Miſs Swinney by a partition of deal, ſhe found it impoſſible to cloſe her eyes, from his vehement ravings. She eagerly liſtened for coherence in his ſentences, but heard only the wildeſt effuſions of delirium, in which real diſtreſſes and real ſubjects of accuſation were ſo blended with imaginary horrors and injuries, that ſhe was doubly ſhocked to hear them: fortunately however, he appeared uncommonly to dread the preſence and reproaches of his unfortunate Sophia, ſo he called her, and on that account ſcarcely ever ſuffered his voice to riſe much above its uſual pitch, ſo that Mrs. Raymond could not diſtinguiſh any ſound to alarm her.

At length towards the dawn his accents ſunk into a murmur, and then wholly ceaſed. Miſs Swinney hoped that he had fallen into a ſlumber, and found herſelf impelled by an irreſiſtible anxiety to diſcover if her flattering expectations were well founded, but heſitated entering his room from the fear of diſturbing him. She had thrown herſelf upon the bed without undreſſing; and after ſome moments of irreſolution, on hearing Mr. Aſtell ſpeaking to the ſervants, ſhe ventured to ſteal in. A few hours had changed poor Raymond almoſt beyond belief: no hectic now fluſhed his burning cheek, no treacherous fire ſparkled in his diſtempered eye; but all was pale, ghaſtly, and inanimate, ſave a convulſive ſpaſm that, at ſhort intervals, diſtorted his features.

The apothecary looked very grave, and in anſwer to her enquiring motion, ſhook his head. She wept from the compaſſion ſuch an object could not fail to inſpire.—She had beheld the

ſame

ſame man but one ſhort month back, elated with youth, health and affluence—the envy of ſome, the admiration of others: flattered by the high conſideration of his equally thoughtleſs companions, by the more ſedulous and artful adulation of thoſe who ſtudied to daſh him from this height to ſcorn and poverty, and finally by the ſucceſs of his concealed addreſſes to Miſs Beauclerc, which gratified at once his vanity, his inclination, and his revenge upon her family, who had harſhly rejected his more open pretenſions.

Seduced by the force of pernicious examples, by the ſanction of a too pervading practice, and by the inſinuations of thoſe who had perhaps themſelves been the dupes to anterior villany, he turned over his inheritance to gamblers, and plunged into a vortex which engulphed his probity, his humanity, his honor, peace, and life.

CHAP. IV.

Two heroines taken down from their ſtilts.

EARLY the next morning, the phyſician's poſt-chaiſe again ſtopped at the garden door, from whence Mrs. Raymond could not be diſturbed by the ſound of the wheels. Miſs Swinney learned from him, that her packet had by this time reached the metropolis, and felt at once relief and terror from the intelligence. When he walked up ſtairs to examine the ſituation of the

the patient, her anxiety overcame all attention to form, and she accompanied him to the bedside of poor Raymond, who was entirely insensible, and she saw that the convulsions were stronger and more frequent. The physician wrote, but avowed that he was almost hopeless as to the effect of the prescription, declaring that he had scarcely ever before witnessed so rapid a progression of dangerous symptoms. Selina shuddered, and Mr. Astell increased her wretchedness by saying, that he had been sent for to a case of urgency, and hinting that he could no longer wholly neglect his general business. He told her that he must leave the gentleman for a few hours; but he would send his assistant to attend him in the interim, and undertook to procure a nurse to relieve Mrs. Raymond's maid, who would be obliged to attend her mistress in the day. This was scarcely arranged, and the physician departed, when Sophia's bell announced that she was more watchful than had been expected. As Miss Swinney sometimes rose with the sun, because heroines are always matinal, she did not fear alarming her unhappy friend by appearing dressed at so early an hour, and answered the summons instead of the attendant, whose looks of fatigue, and countenance of terror might have betrayed the mournful secret.

After a hasty salutation, Mrs. Raymond enquired if she had not heard the step of her husband about five minutes back, descending the stairs. Miss Swinney colored at this unexpected question, but almost instantly recollecting herself, replied, that it must have been William whom her friend had heard, for she had seen him descend the staircase, and open the garden door at the time mentioned. Sophia looked dissatisfied

ſatisfied with this explanation, and after a pauſe, expreſſed a ſtrong inclination to riſe. Miſs Swinney was now ſo much alarmed, that her caution forſook her, and ſhe oppoſed the wiſh with an earneſtneſs that confirmed poor Mrs. Raymond's vague ſuſpicions.

"Something dreadful has happened to Auguſtus!" exclaimed ſhe; "I will ſee him even if you refuſe me your aid—I will crawl to him without aſſiſtance!" and to execute this threat, ſhe ſuddenly threw herſelf on the floor, with only a thin wrapping gown about her.

Miſs Swinney ſtill more frightened, rung the bell with violence, and the maid appeared, with a countenance burſting to diſcloſe what the preſence of her miſtreſs reſtrained her from uttering. The efforts of poor Sophia ſoon yielded to the ſuperior ſtrength of her woman and Selina, and ſhe was again placed on her bed, almoſt fainting with pain and anxious terror.

The attendant fancying that ſhe was inſenſible, becauſe her eyes were cloſed, exclaimed to Miſs Swinney in a tone rendered louder than uſual by an hyſterical tremor—"Lord, Ma'am, my poor maſter is going off in the vi'lenteſt convulſions I ever ſee! Oh Chriſt! here's my poor dear miſſeſs too—there's death in her face!"

Sophia had indeed for a time ceaſed to breathe; for the firſt part of the woman's ſpeech had reached her ear, and the ſudden intelligence had baniſhed all ſenſation of wretchedneſs and even of exiſtence. The aſſiſtance of Miſs Swinney and the maid were ineffectual; and when with difficulty they had recovered her to life, they were again obliged to reſtrain by force her frantic efforts to fly to her dying Auguſtus. The reſult of the conteſt was a ſucceſſion

ceſſion of faintings, which left her unable any further to expreſs her wiſhes or intentions; and after a tedious interval, Selina ventured to leave her unhappy friend, that ſhe might learn from the medical aſſiſtant, if ſhe could ſtill cheriſh a lingering hope of Raymond's recovery.

Mr. Aſtell had again returned to him; but far from leſſening her inquietude, he expreſſed his apprehenſions that the patient could not poſſibly hold out till the friends ſhe had written to, arrived. This idea completed the miſery of her ſituation: reflections the moſt haraſſing and unwelcome ruſhed upon her:—but for her inſtigations, Sophia would never have conſented to leave the houſe of indulgent parents, to marry againſt their advice and wiſhes—but for her perſuaſions, Raymond would now moſt probably have been on his projected voyage to India, in good health, and with reaſonable hopes of returning to Europe, and ſeeing better days—but for her, his wife would then have been ſtill under the protection of a mother, who, whatever might be her characteriſtic foibles and follies, had endeavoured to extend to her child a mother's cares, and of a father, who ſhutting his hand to all the world beſide, forgot his avarice to ſee her happy. In ſhort, Miſs Selina felt a dreadful conſciouſneſs that her influence over her friend had been exerted to conduct her to miſery, perhaps equally with her huſband to an untimely grave; and that the reſult of her extravagant flights and pernicious advice had brought ſorrow and anguiſh upon the heads of thoſe who had weakly liſtened to her, and remorſe, perhaps opprobrium, upon herſelf. Stung with ſuch ideas, the young lady, ever haſty in forming her reſolutions, dropped upon her knees,

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and took Heaven to witneſs a haſty vow to abandon her romantic opinions, and conform to thoſe of her parents, who could not as yet boaſt of the due obedience and ſubjection of their hopeful daughter.

The predictions of Mr. Aſtell were juſtified by the event: poor Raymond expired in the preſence of the phyſician, two hours before a hack-chaiſe brought his father-in-law and Mr. Swinney to the door; and Miſs Selina took refuge from the interview ſhe had ſufficient reaſon to dread, in the apartment of her widowed friend, whom ſhe found half dreſſed—a taſk ſhe had without aſſiſtance reſolutely undertaken, that ſhe might learn the worſt her apprehenſions but too well whiſpered. But the extreme pain and inconvenience of her lame foot had compelled her to reſt for a moment before ſhe could crawl to the door, and in this interval, the entrance of Miſs Swinney prevented the effort.

"Oh my dear creature!" exclaimed ſhe, ruſhing forward, "I ſhall die with fright and alarm—your papa and mine are arrived—how ſhall I appear before them?"

"My father!" repeated Mrs. Raymond in a faint accent of ſurpriſe, and with increaſed agitation of ſpirits.

As ſhe was ſpeaking, he entered the room, preſenting a countenance in which compaſſion and diſtreſs were ſtrongly marked; and folding his daughter to his boſom, called her his dear Sophy, his poor widowed girl. She ſtarted at the laſt appellation, and after a ſevere ſtruggle with her anguiſh at thus having her worſt ſurmiſes confirmed, burſt into a flood of tears that conſiderably relieved her; and ſoothed by the tenderneſs of her father, her grief was more calm,

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than from her former violence of emotion might have been expected.

She wished much to take a last farewell of her luckless Raymond, but the entreaties and representations of Mr. Beauclerc prevailed over this inclination, strong as it was; and at his earnest intercession, she suffered herself to be removed in two days to a retired lodging at Hithe, to escape from the curious observation, which the almost inevitable circulation of some part of the story produced.

Mr. Swinney remained at the cottage, to ensure proper respect to the remains of the deceased, and to arrange all pecuniary affairs. The letters Raymond had written on the night preceding his duel with Major Hangon, had been given to the care of Miss Selina, with other papers apparently of some consequence, taken from his pocket by the attentive kindness of Mr. Astell, who could not avoid observing that they might have fallen into improper hands but for this precaution.

Mr. Mordaunt was written to for instructions concerning the interment of his late ward, whose father having resided near thirty years in Lisbon, to attend to some commercial concerns, had lost all traces of the different branches of his family, with whom he never corresponded; and having sent his only child Augustus to England, to receive his education, and imbibe the principles and language of his own countrymen, the young man found himself at the death of his father, totally destitute of family connections: a circumstance Mr. Mordaunt accounted for, by informing him that the nearest relations of his deceased parent had emigrated to America. His mother, who had not survived his birth, was a Portuguese orphan

orphan of considerable beauty, but of an obscure family, with whom the elder Mr. Raymond preserved no communication. Mr. Mordaunt therefore was the only person who appeared to take any interest in the fate of Augustus; and he had discharged his trust with an integrity and zeal that procured him the dislike of the thoughtless young man, and occasioned an estrangement between them when he became of age: yet this upright man of the law heard of his destiny with unfeigned sorrow, and prepared to perform the last duties of friendship, though that friendship had been chilled by neglect, and repelled by unkindness. He left his own affairs to the management of his agents, and hastened to the place where Raymond had breathed his last. He was buried in the island, and a modest stone marked the name and years of the youth thus snatched from a world, in which his fate a few months back had appeared so enviable.

This mournful ceremony over, Mr. Mordaunt, who had already received the letter which the writer had meant to be a posthumous one, was assisted by Mr. Swinney in adjusting the pecuniary demands upon the young people. On examining the papers of the deceased, a memorandum was found, in a hand scarcely legible, which intimated that he had that day executed a bond in favour of Mr. Estcourt, for £ 9400; and as the nature of the debt was too well guessed at, Mr. Mordaunt was highly exasperated with this pretended friend, for the considerable share he appeared to have had in the plunder and ruin of the imprudent Raymond. His coadjutor, who knew that no settlement could have been made of the lady's fortune from the privacy of the marriage, consulted whether

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it would not be advisable to preserve it, if possible, a secret, that so considerable a property might not be wrested from Mr. Beauclerc's family, or to prevent any litigation and unpleasant exposure of circumstances which would be better buried in oblivion.

Mr. Mordaunt did not immediately reply to this proposition, which he said was of a very delicate nature, and required much consideration; but every hope of putting it in practice had nearly been frustrated by the unlooked-for appearance of Mr. Estcourt two days after the interment of his dear friend, who demanding to see Mr. Swinney, addressed him by his name, and condoled, in the language of ceremonious regret, for his recent loss.

"I have had the honor of introducing myself to your fair daughter, Sir," continued he; "and I was induced by her merit and amiable qualities, to ensure poor Raymond the enjoyment of his good fortune, by taking all his debts of honour upon myself. They appeared indeed to be to an alarming amount, but my humanity overcame all prudential motives, and in return I had this bond forced upon me as a recognition of the obligation, as he foresaw perhaps, that I was likely to become the sacrifice of my friendship for him and his lovely wife. Raymond's death is an inexpressible inconvenience to me, for I am called upon to pay on his account, five thousand pounds more than I at this moment possess, and I have actually only a week allowed me to raise the money in.—I am far from wishing at such a moment, to make any distressing claim; but I am urged by the unlucky predicament in which I find myself, to make use of some intelligence which reached me by mere accident, that

that your daughter, Mr. Raymond's widow, is poſſeſſed of a very ample independent fortune, and I ſhould hope ſhe has too much reſpect for the memory of the deceaſed, to ſuffer——"

Mr. Swinney interrupted him, and was on the point of making ſome warm reply, both to reprehend the honorable gambler, and to undeceive him, but Mr. Mordaunt prevented him, and entreated that he would withdraw for a few moments—a requeſt the ſuppoſed father-in-law complied with. He then remonſtrated with Mr. Eſtcourt upon the indelicacy of introducing ſuch a buſineſs in a moment ſo diſtreſſing, and promiſed upon his word, that he would endeavour to enforce any legal claim he might have upon the fortune of Mr. Swinney's daughter when they met in town: and in leſs than a month, he added, he truſted the affair would be ſettled to the ſatisfaction of every honeſt man.

The character of Mr. Mordaunt was well known to the man of faſhion, in whoſe family he was eſteemed for his equity, and the able and diligent manner with which he tranſacted all their concerns in the line of his profeſſion; and Eſtcourt of all men, leaſt wiſhed or expected to encounter him at the preſent moment. He yielded therefore very readily to his repreſentations, and relying upon the promiſe given, withdrew extremely rejoiced that he had ſo well begun a negociation, of which he felt, all bronzed as he was, rather aſhamed, and in truth, not without much reaſon: for not ſatisfied with having bought up the play-debts of poor Raymond for a mere ſong, which he did on hearing that he had privately married a City heireſs, he had taken advantage of the indiſpoſition, the confuſion of

mind, and half diſtraction of the unfortunate young man, and fearleſs of premature detection, had cauſed the bond to be drawn up for nineteen thouſand four hundred pounds, inſtead of the ſum marked in Raymond's memorandum, which, ill as he was, he had made on returning home, that his generous and worthy friend might have that additional teſtimony ſuperadded to the other, of the reality of his claim, ſhould his indiſpoſition prove fatal, of which he felt a preſage.

In the evening Mr. Mordaunt paſſed over to Hithe, where Mr. Beauclerc was enabled to give a better account of the health and ſpirits of his daughter than he had hoped to hear. He was then informed of the claim made by Eſtcourt, and of the memorandum of his ſon-in-law, which appeared to be ten thouſand pounds leſs than the nefarious bond he had ſeen; and concluding with the information of the miſtake which had ariſen not unnaturally, as to the lady recently widowed, he adviſed Mr. Beauclerc to ſuffer the affair to reſt until they met in town, when he hoped to adjuſt it properly. He then bade him farewell, ſaying that he muſt travel all night, as his preſence was urgently required at home.

The avarice of Mr. Beauclerc was alarmed at the intelligence he had received, and he very much approved the plan of Selina's father, to profit by the miſtake which had gone abroad, and preſerve with the fortune of his own daughter, the ſecret of her connection with poor Raymond. He immediately communicated his wiſhes, and the circumſtance which had given riſe to them, to Sophia, leſt ſhe ſhould unadviſedly betray herſelf; but it had a very different effect upon her than he had intended, for ſhe inſiſted that the memory of her beloved Auguſtus ſhould be

be preſerved, free from blemiſh, and therefore ſhe declared that the debt ſhould be diſcharged, as far at leaſt as her fortune could liquidate it.

Miſs Swinney was alarmed at the indication of ſuch a meaſure, as ſhe dreaded the effect it might have on the mind of Mr. Beauclerc, whoſe good offices, ſhe learned, had been very requiſite to induce her father to receive her again into his houſe and favour. She now wiſhed the initiatory adventures of her friend to terminate as ſmoothly as poſſible; that her ſhare in promoting them might not be too prominent in the recollection of all thoſe who felt themſelves aggrieved by it. Since the diſcovery of poor Raymond's deſperate affairs, ſhe had ſecretly loaded his memory with the charges of ſelfiſhneſs and duplicity, entirely forgetting that he meant to have acted differently, had not her officious and never-ſleeping zeal at once forwarded his deſtiny, and the miſery of his wife.

Sophia warmly urged her father to write to Eſtcourt, and undeceive him; and Miſs Swinney to avert a ſtorm, ſuddenly reſorted to the letter of Raymond, the only one of thoſe found in his pocket-book, which had not been delivered according to the addreſs, in the hope that its contents would furniſh argument in favour of the opinion of Mr. Beauclerc; an expectation founded on the earneſt and repeated advice of Auguſtus to his wife, to preſerve their marriage a ſecret, if poſſible, from the world. This letter had been hitherto detained from her, in the fear that her affliction would be increaſed by reading his poſthumous adieu; and her father now conſented that it ſhould be produced, in the idea of finding ſome clue to diſcover the evident villany of his ſuppoſed friend.

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Mrs. Raymond received it with much emotion, and having retired to read it, left Miſs Swinney in a pitiable ſtate of apprehenſion and curioſity. It was two long hours ere this agitation was quieted, for ſo long ſhe ſuffered poor Sophia to remain unmoleſted in her own apartment; and then, unable to endure the torture of further ſuſpenſe, ſhe tapped at the door for admittance. Mrs. Raymond opened it after an interval of a few ſeconds, and her eyes gave evidence of the manner in which thoſe two hours had been paſſed by her. Thoſe of the gentle Selina betrayed ſo pointedly the eager with ſhe experienced to learn the parting ſentiments and injunctions of Auguſtus, that Mrs. Raymond could not fail to underſtand them; but being deſirous of paying the compliment of a firſt communication to her father, ſhe begged Miſs Swinney to take the letter to him, and to excuſe her appearance at the dinner-table.

Whether the folds of the epiſtle were conveniently pliant in the hands of the ambaſſadreſs, Miſs Selina alone could diſcloſe; ſhe entered the ſitting-room however, in which ſhe had left Mr. Beauclerc, with a countenance of exultation, and poſſibly from a prophetic inſpiration, informed him that her dear friend's overſtrained notions of probity would now be happily combated by the dying requeſt of her huſband, which no doubt would have a proper weight.

Miſs Swinney had not gueſſed wrong, for poor Raymond having written the letter before he went forth to encounter the vengeance of Major Hangon, had ſtrongly prohibited Sophia from publiſhing their connexion.

Mr. Beauclerc was ſo much delighted with the proſpect of retaining his daughter's fortune, that he

he overlooked two or three hints which the posthumous letter contained, to the prejudice of Miss Swinney's prudence, and assured her with renewed energy, that he would settle her re-admission into the house of her father, to her satisfaction.

In a week Sophia was able to travel, and Mr. Beauclerc conducted her immediately to a summer villa he had purchased about a year back at her request, between Teddington and Hamptonwick, where her mother was waiting to receive and pardon her; and Miss Swinney, at her earnest entreaty, was accompanied to town by Mr. Beauclerc himself: yet whatever influence his superior fortune and consequence might give him with her family, the fair Selina could only obtain the entire forgiveness of her justly offended mother, by consenting to espouse a suitor she had hitherto rejected with disdain, because he was an odious middle aged man, of a plain person, and moderate income depending upon his industry, and because he was an attorney, and lived in Chancery-Lane. All these circumstances, so shocking to her refined ideas, would still have been irremediable bars to her obedience, had she not fortunately recollected her hasty vow to conform to the future wishes and injunctions of papa and mama. This timely remembrance immediately altered her mode of conduct; she signified her submissive resignation, and decked in all the subduing paraphernalia of pensive woe, assumed a downcast look, and was the gentle victim to tyrannic commands.

In three weeks she became Mrs. Ellinger, and was rather consoled on the occasion, when she reflected that her new name was much preferable to the former, which had too often wounded her

her ears from its common and vulgar sound. But alas! the abode of the husband, far from being decorated with elegance to receive the bride, exhibited in the dingy wainscoted apartment the mortified Selina chose to call her drawing-room, a set of old-fashioned, worn-out, horse-hair, mahogany chairs, and an antique black escritoire, with red tape sticking out at the loose hinges, to denote the profession of its owner. She considered however, that it would not be decorous to begin an immediate innovation, and consoled herself with writing a narrative of her vexations and distresses to her widowed friend, who had not yet visited the metropolis, but remained with her mother at Avelines, which was the name of their house.

Mr. Beauclerc had left them, to consult Mr. Mordaunt in town upon the means of evading the payment of the bond in the possession of Estcourt: but though the man of law was unwilling that he should succeed in obtaining so considerable a sum as must be given up when Mrs. Raymond became of age, he was delicate as to the method which might be taken to withhold it. He rather wished that an open discussion should take place, of the circumstances relative to the business, and he had then little doubt, he said, but that the family of Mr. Estcourt, who were people of strict honor and probity, would interfere to accommodate the affair, and bring the debt within the limits of reason and probability; that is, that the young man should be reimbursed what sums he could prove to have paid for the deceased, no matter on what pretence, for he had reason to suppose the amount would not be considerable; and thus any unpleasant public discussion or accusation relating to

to a character and conduct which humanity ſhould now be ſilent upon, would be avoided; and what was yet more important, Mrs. Raymond might then reject the ridiculous plan of a myſterious concealment, which would almoſt infallibly blight her character after the decided ſtep ſhe had taken.

Mr. Beauclerc liſtened to this propoſition without any inclination to put it in practice; for he ſuſpected that it would occaſion him to diſburſe more money than he was willing to part with, and any chicanery and concealment was to him much preferable, if it promiſed to be the means of ſaving even a few hundred pounds. In proportion as his daughter recovered her health, his tenderneſs gave place to the ruling paſſion, and he ſecretly execrated and fretted at the ſum this curſed freak of Sophy had already, and was ſtill likely to coſt him.

Before the affair was in the leaſt ſettled, Mr. Mordaunt was unexpectedly compelled to leave town; and in his abſence, as Eſtcourt did not wiſh for his interference, he called at the houſe of Mr. Swinney, and again preſented his bond, with a hint that, in conſideration of immediate payment, he would not inſiſt upon the entire ſum ſtated in it. In this emergency Mr. Ellinger was applied to, to negociate the buſineſs, who, with ſome management of incident, contrived to get the bond in his poſſeſſion upon the payment of eight hundred pounds, which was ſtated with truth to be the whole of Miſs Swinney's fortune—a fact Mr. Eſtcourt was too well aſſured of, as he had only the day before examined a will in Doctors Commons, which bequeathed to Sarah Swinney (for alas! Selina was merely an embelliſhment) eight hundred pounds, to be given

given into her own poſſeſſion at the age of twenty and one years, as a mark of the regard and affection of her aunt, Dorothy Swinney, of Barbican. And though this ſum conſiderably exceeded what Mr. Eſtcourt had parted with on ſpeculation, yet he was ſo much enraged with Raymond's London valet, at a diſcovery ſo little tallying with his officious information, that he diſcharged him roughly from his own ſervice, into which he had taken him, not only to reward this intelligence, but in conſideration of many uſeful hints he had previouſly favored him with. But his anger and diſappointment were not alone excited by the unexpected failure of this reſource; for a decided torrent of miſchance overtaking him at once, and the ſpotted cubic gods who had hitherto been propitious, becoming invariably adverſe to their votary, the houſe and grounds in the Iſle of Wight were parted with in the ſame ſtyle of diſpatch they were purchaſed in, and the bond given up for the ſum ſpecified in the will of Mrs. Dorothy Swinney, of Barbican: Mr. Beauclerc eagerly produced the money; Mr. Ellinger, as attorney for the young lady, very gravely paid it, and both parties ſeparated, tolerably well ſatisfied that the individual efforts of each to impoſe upon the credulity of the other, had not entirely failed.

This important affair ſettled, Mr. Beauclerc returned to Avelines, which he found both his wife and daughter ſtill unwilling to quit, that they might avoid the ſneering enquiries, and the half-pointed impertinence of the circle in which they had been accuſtomed to move in London. At Avelines, Sophia had leiſure for reflection, and the preſent tone of her mind did not allow her to repel thoſe which her ſituation gave riſe to

to: in compliance with the laſt requeſt of her regretted Raymond, which alone could have influenced her, ſhe had re-aſſumed her father's name, and locked up her wedding-ring, with the picture of her huſband, and a few lighter memorials of his attachment. The natural vivacity of her character ſeemed to have ſunk under the diſappointment of her firſt hopes, and ſhe appeared to have no further wiſh, than to paſs the remainder of her life in her preſent quiet abode.

The fair Selina, on the contrary, was almoſt in deſpair at the humiliating inſipidity of her exiſtence: her huſband, far from being refined by his alliance with her, ſeemed to have acquired a double portion of impenetrable ſtupidity, and her utmoſt eloquence could not baniſh the old eſcrutoire from her drawing-room, nor could ſhe prevail ſo far as to procure an exchange of the deteſtable clumſy mahogany chairs for modern *fauteuils*. As for Chelſea hangings, pier glaſſes, girandoles, Rumford ſtoves, Lucas's ſcreens, turtleſhell work tables, and canopied ſofas, they were entirely unattainable, to the utter annihilation of her refinement; Mr. Ellinger too, talked very ſeriouſly of wearing a cloſe curled black bob. Selina almoſt ſunk under ſuch an accumulation of misfortunes, and was only recalled to a pleaſing conſciouſneſs of delicate exiſtence by her correſpondence with her deareſt and moſt hapleſs friend, the myſterious widow.

CHAP. V.

Heroic hopes revived by adventures in perſpective.

FATE had not, however, dealt quite ſo hardly by Mrs. Ellinger, as ſhe had found reaſon to fear; for as ſhe was on the point of giving up the moſt glimmering proſpect of future ſentimental and elegant diſtreſs, ſhe received a preſſing entreaty from Sophia, that ſhe would fly to Avelines on an affair of the moſt ſerious import. Her huſband, who now tranſacted a conſiderable portion of buſineſs for Mr. Beauclerc, did not think proper to oppoſe the ſummons, which was ſanctioned by Sophia's mother, and Mrs. Ellinger obeyed it with alacrity.

At Avelines ſhe learned a ſecret, which Mrs. Beauclerc had hitherto deſired her daughter to conceal from every one, that no whiſpered rumour might ſteal abroad, and in the hope perhaps that accident might prevent the neceſſity of bringing it in any degree to light: in ſhort, the gentle Selina found that her widowed friend was on the point of becoming a mother. This delightful intelligence ſet every heroic faculty in motion.—What was to be done?—was ſhe to perſuade Mr. Ellinger to ſuffer her to adopt the dear baby, and bring it in due ſeaſon into the family as her own?—Was ſhe, as her own time of confinement approached, to withdraw, and produce

produce herſelf again to the world with twins? Whatever was to be done, ſhe would do; ſhe only entreated that ſhe might be allowed an intereſt in the dear lovely infant, and that ſhe might likewiſe be permitted to give it a name, with the approbation of her amiable Sophia, who could not return an immediate aſſent to the propoſition, becauſe ſhe was not at preſent at the conference, leſt it might too much agitate her ſpirits.

Mr. Beauclerc gently checked her flight of fancy by reminding her, that whatever ſhe obligingly undertook to do, in order to accommodate to the peculiar ſituation of his daughter, muſt receive the entire approbation of Mr. Ellinger, without which he could not form any plan; and as he was now ſatisfied of her readineſs to ſerve Sophia, he would write to her huſband to require his preſence.

The ardor of poor Selina was rather diminiſhed by this remembrance, for her *caro ſpoſo* had the brutal quality of having opinions of his own, and of chooſing to abide by them in defiance of entreaty, perſuaſion, or argument. His arrival confirmed the fears which had ſucceeded to her heroiſm; for he poſitively refuſed to receive as a child of his own, the offspring of another, which he ſaid, he conſidered to be an unjuſtifiable impoſition upon the world in general, and a more unpardonable breach of faith to every individual of his own family. Nor was he inſincere in his proteſtations; though the craft with which he had more than tacitly deceived Mr. Eſtcourt, induced Sophia's father to think otherwiſe. But that tranſaction was merely in the courſe of buſineſs, and Mr. Ellinger had witneſſed others of a hue ſo much more

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inclining to knavery, that his rectitude had not once revolted from it; but the circumstance in discussion was wholly novel to him, and custom had never settled this species of deceit easily upon his conscience. The only concession that could be obtained, was that at the expiration of three years after its birth, the child, whether male or female, should be received into his house as an orphan ward—but with this proviso, that a sum of money should be settled upon it, sufficient for the purposes of decently educating it and settling it in the world; as a never-failing resource, should any accident or accidents combine to leave it wholly upon his hands.

Mr. Beauclerc was compelled to acquiesce in this arrangement, for Sophia refused to part with her child upon any other terms than that Mrs. Ellinger should be allowed to give it those attentions it was denied to her to bestow, and that it might be so placed that she herself could frequently see it.

In a few weeks after, she brought into the world a girl, having been previously removed to an obscure village at a considerable distance from town, where she assumed the name of Montresor, which, from its signification, she had determined her little orphan should be called, since she could not give her the family appellation to which she had a natural right. Every circumstance was attended to, that could secure the secrecy required, and Sophia returned to Avelines six weeks after her accouchement, having previously had her baby conveyed to Mrs. Ellinger's care, who placed it to nurse, with her approbation, at a neat little dwelling at Kilburn, on the Edgware road; and Mr. Beauclerc consented that.

that his family ſhould return to London at his daughter's earneſt entreaty, that ſhe might be within a walk of Selina's little charge.

The child was baptized Roſella, for ſo Mrs. Ellinger had predetermined, and it was not judged prudent to oppoſe her; the mother merely ſtipulated that Auguſta ſhould be added, in commemoration of the unfortunate Raymond. To remove the objection Mr. Ellinger had raiſed, Sophia, who was now of age, placed fifteen hundred pounds in the funds, in the name of Roſella Auguſta Montreſor—a ſum ſhe had no inclination to raiſe the diſpleaſure of her father by increaſing, as ſhe was firmly reſolved never more to marry, and had privately executed a will, by which ſhe conſtituted Roſella the ſole heireſs of her property, with the exception of a legacy of five hundred pounds to her friend Selina.

According to the tenor of the agreement, at the end of three years the child was taken into the houſe of Mr. Ellinger, as his orphan ward, very much to the ſatisfaction of his wife, who appeared infinitely more fond of little Miſs Montreſor than of a ſon and daughter ſhe had preſented her huſband ſince their marriage, which was generally attributed to the ſuperior beauty of Roſella, whoſe opening graces ſtruck every eye.

In this interim Miſs Beauclerc had amuſed the heavy hours in viſiting this beloved child, in making purchaſes for her, and working for her; and the whole time which was not thus employed, or in attending to the increaſing infirmities of her mother, was paſſed in reading the novels of the day, a practice which was too much confirmed into a habit before her marriage

riage, not to be renewed when retirement and leiſure invited her to purſue it.

Roſella was now occaſionally taken to Avelines, and inſenſibly her viſits were extended every ſucceſſive time ſhe quitted Mr. Ellinger's dingy looking manſion, from days to weeks, and from weeks to months. The hundred tongues of rumour had long ſince been telling each a different tale, at the ſudden diſappearance of Miſs Beauclerc from the houſe of her father—her very quiet return to Avelines, her ſecluſion, and the ſucceeding transformation of a faſhionable lively girl, to a dull moping young woman: conſequently a hundred different reaſons were given for all this, and it was almoſt impoſſible but amongſt them the true one ſhould eſcape.

Fortunately for Mr. Eſtcourt, he had not the mortification of learning that he had been duped; for the extreme diſorder of his affairs had compelled him to accept the charge of ſecretary to an embaſſy, and at his return Miſs Beauclerc was no longer talked of, except in the narrow circle of viſiting acquaintance her mother ſtill kept up, where indeed the continual appearance of Roſella gave birth to much epigrammatic ſcandal.

This child of ſentiment, as Mrs. Ellinger choſe to call her, diſcovered great affection for her unacknowledged mother, which was a very natural conſequence of the perpetual *agrèments* ſhe was the means of procuring her, and the unlimited indulgence by which a fond and admiring parent gratifies her own feelings, and conciliates the love of her offspring. But Mrs. Ellinger imputed the circumſtance to the myſterious workings of Nature, and Sophia was highly flattered

tered by the attachment of her daughter, whose return to the house of her guardian, after a long visit at Avelines, was at length attended almost invariably by passionate regrets and fits of crying, which after a sufficient repetition, began to ruffle the temper of the gentle Mrs. Ellinger, and induce her to suspect that her endearing careſſes, and enthusiastic attachment did not entirely compensate to her young charge for the morose formality of her husband, the teasing jealousy of her son and daughter, and the dreary gloom of their habitation, which was indeed far from boasting that air *riante* that Marmontel recommends to surrounding objects, in order to form an infant mind to cheerfulness and gaiety.

This supposition recurring too often, piqued the vanity of the good lady, and weakened her violent regard for Rosella, who had soon little more to recommend her to the romantic Selina than her features and figure, which she predicted would be enchanting, and likewise the secret of her birth, which she hoped and trusted, would lead to many interesting adventures. As her fondness for the child had been rather inconvenient to Miss Beauclerc, by sometimes depriving her too long of her little Rosella, the effect of her growing coldness was highly gratifying both to mother and daughter; and by the time Miss Montresor had passed her thirteenth year, she regularly spent ten months out of the twelve either at the house of Mr. Beauclerc in town, or at Avelines.

Her mother spared no expence in procuring her the usual acquirements of her sex, and often laid aside a most interesting volume, to repeat with her the lessons of her masters. Mr. Beauclerc fretted and remonstrated at an expendi-

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ture he thought unneceſſary: but as the income of Sophia's fortune was at her own diſpoſal, ſhe entreated him to allow her the only ſatisfaction ſhe could derive from it; and he uſually gave up his argument after a trifling cavil, except when he recollected that his daughter had, in her twenty-ſixth year, declined the alliance of a family of diſtinction for the ſake of Roſella—the child of a man not worth a groat. He condeſcended however, to be amuſed with her little ſallies and girliſh frolics when the buſineſs of the day was over; and Mrs. Beauclerc, who had, ſince her daughter's ſecluſion, retired on her part from "cards and ſcandal," ſometimes deigned to employ this diſowned grandchild in reading Tillotſon's Sermons to her, with now and then a variation of Young's Night Thoughts, and the Whole Duty of Man: ſo that the loſs of Roſella's ſociety was much regretted by each of the trio at Avelines, when decorum obliged them to ſend her for a week or two to Mrs. Ellinger.

This lady, without loſing the idea of being a principal actreſs in the foreſeen adventures of the charming orphan, was laboring to render her daughter Livia a ſweet intereſting child of exquiſite ſenſibility and promiſing lovelineſs; and her ſon ſhe hoped to behold in a few years, a moſt graceful and manly youth, intelligence beaming from his fine eyes, and tender fondneſs exhibited for dear mama in every action, whilſt exceſſive love ſhould be conveyed in every glance to the enchanting Roſella Montreſor. Unluckily however, Miſs was unconquerably froward, obſtinate, pert, hard-featured, and ricketty; circumſtances very eaſily accounted for, from her too perfect reſemblance to papa, and from her having been nurſed by an idle ſervant

vant girl in the atmosphere of Chancery-Lane, with the relievo of an airing into Holborn every day, that Betty might meet her sweet-heart, and bring home vegetables for cook; and in these excursions Miss Livia was stuck upon a green-stall, to gnaw a bit of turnip, whilst the lovers coquetted at their leisure. Her temper, which would have been sour and resolute, like that of Mr. Ellinger, had she been of the same age and sex, was improved by frequent reproofs and slaps on the face for being idle, vain, and untoward like her foolish mother; and on the other hand, she was often deprived of her playthings, cakes, and finery for frowning, pouting, and snapping like her unsupportable father; whilst the servants caressed and applauded her for taking off master and misses when they scolded and quarrelled together, "jest as natral as if 'twas them 'emselves."

The young gentleman, her brother, was remarkable only for a most oafish stupidity, and a disgusting assortment of features; and this engaging pair were the associates of Rosella's younger days, whose patience and ingenuity had often been exercised in preserving herself from the effects of Miss Ellinger's dislike and envy, and in rescuing poor William from her sudden fits of wrath and indignation. When with them, her own wishes and inclinations had been invariably sacrificed to an ardent desire of keeping the peace, any breach of which, on arriving at the knowledge of Mr. Ellinger, was followed by a formal complaint to her good friend Miss Beaucleic, and the next visit was unhappily abridged. But this frequent exertion of forbearance, and the disappointments which sometimes awaited her, prevented Rosella from degenerating

degenerating into a ſpoiled child; and as ſhe met with indulgence only from one quarter, and either conſtraint or vexations from every other, ſhe ſoon learned to appreciate properly the unabated kindneſs of her mother, and to repay it with gratitude and affection inſtead of capricious exactions and peeviſh whims.

A ſubject of contention had however lately ariſen from the envious petulancy of Miſs Ellinger, which put to flight all the philoſophical endurance of Roſella: it was occaſioned by the appearance of Mr. Mordaunt, who ſometimes called in Chancery-Lane to ſee her; for he had much diſapproved the conduct of Mr. Beauclerc, and thought the child, thus diſowned and caſt from the boſom of the family wich ought to have cheriſhed her, moſt unjuſtly dealt by, and a coolneſs of intercourſe had taken place between him and the inhabitants of Avelines: but to the little Montreſor he had transferred all the regard he formerly felt for her father, ſuperadded to a jealous ſort of compaſſion for her wrongs.

Roſella's little tormenter, ſeized with avidity upon an opportunity to give her pain, by ſpeaking with childiſh, but outrageous diſreſpect of Mr. Mordaunt, whoſe paternal ſolicitude had won the heart of her grateful companion, and ſhe could not then forbear retorting Miſs Livia's ſarcaſms with uncommon warmth; ſhe even defended with eagerneſs the cut of her old friend's ſhoes and coat, and the form of his hat and wig, all of which were in turn the ſource of animadverſion and contempt.

The increaſing countenance and favor of Miſs Beauclerc at length withdrew her from a ſcene ſhe abhorred; and at the age of ſixteen, Roſella

la conſidered Avelines as her home, Mr. Beauclerc's houſe in town as a convenient reſidence to receive the inſtructions of her maſters, and the habitation of Mr. Ellinger a diſagreeable place, where form obliged her ſometimes to appear, and where ſhe was to purchaſe a ſhort-lived peace by repeated preſents, which the unbounded liberality of her kind friend enabled her to make.

In proportion as Sophia and her mother forgot the gay circle they had ſo abruptly quitted, they became enamoured of their peaceful villa, and Avelines was now the date of all Miſs Beauclerc's letters to Mrs. Ellinger, who was delighted that her *imagination* at leaſt might wander in the faſcinating regions of romance, though her perſon was confined to the horrid purlieus of Chancery-Lane: to the myſterious widow ſhe conſtantly remitted three times a week, a long ſheet of paper filled with chimerical expectations, ſupernatural fancies, and wild ſuppoſitions concerning the future fate of Roſella, which, if any reaſonable mother had believed, they muſt have driven her to deſperation: but alas! Sophia had read of caſtles, banditti, inviſible muſic, rugged mountains, and murderous daggers, and indulged her fancy in giving the features of Roſella to all her airy heroines, had conducted her in their perſons, through ſuch horrid adventures, had ſo often ſeen a ſword at her breaſt, a blunderbuſs at her temples, and a terrific viſion appalling her ſenſes, that ſhe thought little of ſuch inevitable incidents, as they muſt infallibly lead her at length, to unheard-of happineſs. The abrupt termination of her own adventures, ſhe was reconciled to; and fancied herſelf one of thoſe celebrated ma-

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mas, deſtined to bring forth beautiful and tender-ſouled creatures, devoted for a given time to miſfortune.

The world had now ceaſed to concern itſelf with the conduct of Miſs Beauclerc, and ſhe was recognized only as a very quiet ſtupid kind of old maid, who had formerly met with a diſappointment, and had conſoled herſelf with novels and religion. That the latter part of the ſuppoſition was ſtrictly juſt, is not certain; ſhe had, however, indulged her early bias, by charging her memory with every production of fancy that had appeared in the laſt fifteen years, and it muſt be imagined, that ſuch an uninterrupted ſeries of images, ſoothing and encouraging a romantic imagination, muſt operate with conſiderable force. At length every pretty young woman ſhe ſaw, was immediately ſuppoſed to be a damſel ſuffering under the preſſure of exceſſive ſenſibility, and every haberdaſher's journeyman who trudged on Sundays acroſs a road ſkirting her father's grounds, was transformed into a love-lorn ſwain in ſearch of his caged divinity. Every letter addreſſed to *her Selina*, exceeded the former in extravagance of idea and opinion, and evinced that ſhe believed Roſella, both in mind and perſon, the moſt perfect of all the perfect young ladies that ever waved a white handkerchief to a baniſhed lover, or ſighed her pure flame in extempore verſe to the whiſtling winds and raging ocean:—and indeed, if the fondneſs of a widowed mother, and the effuſion of a flighty imagination may be allowed for, the ſuppoſition was not ſo extravagant as many of her fancies; for Roſella poſſeſſed a countenance and mien that ſtole univerſal good will, and a character and deportment that ſecured the conqueſt.

queſt. She was all that imagination can form of captivating in adoleſcence—gay, artleſs, forgiving, ſedulous to pleaſe, ſoon piqued, much ſooner reconciled, ardent in her purſuits, compaſſionate to exceſs, credulous becauſe ſhe was unſuſpicious, warm in her attachments, leſs warm in her antipathies, fond of walking, fond of riding, of dancing, of her new harp, of laughing, of ſometimes talking without the trouble of meaſuring her words, fond of looking for the Guinea-hen's eggs at Avelines, fond of the neighbouring ſhepherd's blue-eyed ſon, who had once given her a neſt of chaffinches, and paſſionately fond of Miſs Beauclerc, that dear beſt of friends, who made her life ſo happy: in ſhort, fond of every thing, for every thing then intereſted and amuſed her, excepting Tillotſon's Sermons and Mr. Ellinger's houſehold.

At length ſhe grew formed and womanly, much to the ſatisfaction of her mother, who now eagerly looked forward to her progreſs in celebrity and heroiſm: theſe ſhe knew were not to be attained in the odious metropolis, where the moſt heavy and diſguſting fetters muſt of neceſſity be put upon the ſublimity of romance, and Roſella was therefore almoſt wholly confined to the grounds of Avelines, where ſhe friſked about in that dubious ſtyle of dreſs which flatters the ambition of young girls, by making them appear like women, and gratifies the folly of women, by giving them the ſemblance of young girls.

As the ſummer advanced, Miſs Beauclerc uſually ſpent the mid-day in a little thatched hermitage, raiſed amidſt a cluſter of flowering ſhrubs, upon a lawn which deſcended to the Thames-ſide: in this ſpot ſhe reliſhed more particularly

ticularly the descriptive progress of the loves of all the Ethelindas, the Jemimas, the Fredericas, and the Georgianas, with all their panics, their castles, and their visions; and now that Rosella was of an age to figure with some consideration amidst these groupes of beautiful saints in folio, Miss Beauclerc had a peculiar pleasure in making her read aloud, whilst she contemplated her picturesque figure, and watched the zephyr stealing amidst her light brown tresses. Every wish of the admiring mother then appeared to her, certain of being realized: her Rosella would be the admiration of the multitude, the little deity of unnumbered lovers, and the distinguished choice of some matchless swain.

CHAP. VI.

A glimpse into the regions of sublime distresses.

In the beginning of a lovely Autumn, when the heat rendered the favorite retreat of Miss Beauclerc delicious, she was sitting in it with Rosella, who had, in obedience to her commands, opened a novel, and was reading a splendid account of a celebrated day-break; when she had arrived, however, at the interesting epoch where black and grey quit the field for purple and saffron, she found her eyes attracted from her book, which they constantly were by every moving object, by a large pleasure-boat glittering

ing with decorations. The pillars which supported the canopy were of gilt wood, the curtains of green silk, fringed, tasselled, and festooned, and the ornamented stern exhibited an Earl's coronet embossed and gilt, over an emblazoned crest. The poor novel fell into the background, and Rosella eagerly sprung forward to contemplate so gay a spectacle, when remarking the showy livery of the servants seated in the stern, "Do come and look," exclaimed she, laughing, "dear Miss Beauclerc, do look! here are the colors of Edelferinda's magnificent Aurora upon Lord Morteyne's footmen!"

Miss Beauclerc smiled, notwithstanding this attack upon the most tender of all subjects; for she was delighted to observe that Rosella had attracted the attention of the party in the boat.

"I declare," continued she, in a voice of ecstacy, "they have horns and clarinets! How delightful! Do you think they are going far? I dare say they will return in the afternoon—I would watch here all day but I will see them return!"

One or two of the ladies, pleased with the animation her gestures expressed, bowed to her good-humouredly, to repay the evident admiration with which she viewed them, and Rosella returned the salute with equal ease and vivacity. Half a dozen glasses had been already levelled at her, which she endured with great unconcern, because she had not the least suspicion that she was individually the object of so much curiosity.

When the boat had passed the grounds, she heard the clarinets, and having listened for some time with charmed attention, she turned to Miss Beauclerc, exclaiming—

"How

" How happy they muſt be! There was not one in the whole party that did not ſmile and ſeem pleaſed!"

" Not ſo happy perhaps as you may imagine, my Roſella," returned her friend: " I ſuſpect there are ſome aching boſoms in the groupe."

Roſella proteſted againſt this idea, repeating, " They all looked ſo happy!"

Miſs Beauclerc ſecretly perfiſted however in her ſuppoſition, as ſhe believed, with an exceeding good reaſon: for ſhe had caught the eye of Lord Morteyne fixed upon Roſella with ſome degree of earneſtneſs, one day that her father's carriage and his Lordſhip's happened to paſs on the road: a circumſtance which had been communicated to Mrs. Ellinger with ſuch annotations and preſentiments, that the good lady had from that moment impatiently awaited ſome very ſurpriſing cataſtrophes and *denouements*.

But accident had never put it a ſecond time in Miſs Beauclerc's power to aſcertain how far Lord Morteyne had advanced in the belle paſſion until this morning, when he certainly did turn from a very pretty woman, to whom he had been talking, to ſurvey the lively hermit—an appellation the party had given her; and he only reſumed his converſation with his fair neighbour, when he could no longer with perfect convenience gaze at Roſella. And though on this occaſion his deportment did not entirely pleaſe Miſs Beauclerc, yet ſhe was tolerably certain, to uſe her own language to Selina, that the arrow rankled at his heart.

The imagination of Roſella was ſo occupied by the ideas of gaiety and happineſs ſhe had annexed to the object which had ſo much pleaſed her, that ſhe ſcarcely allowed herſelf time to ſwallow

ſwallow her dinner, that ſhe might run back to the hermitage, ſincerely hoping that no ſtupid people would drop in before tea to recal her to the houſe. Miſs Beauclerc remained in the drawing-room with her mother, who was indiſpoſed, and could not take her afternoon airing; but as the windows of the apartment gave on to the lawn, ſhe watched the motions of Roſella, and ſaw her ſometimes ſtanding at the extremity of the bank, looking earneſtly up the river, and ſometimes beguiling the moment of expectation, by frolicking with an Italian greyhound, who was a great favorite; an exerciſe that rather diſcompoſed her attire, but increaſed the animation and vivid bloom of her countenance.

At length her preſence was required at the tea-table before any boat, except watermen's wherries, had appeared; and with her fancy ſtill hovering round the hermitage, ſhe returned to the drawing-room, and thought Mr. Beauclerc unuſually ſlow and tedious in ſipping his coffee.

"This pamphlet," ſaid the old gentleman, turning the leaves of a political publication, "is pleaſantly written, the principles and ſentiments juſt, the language clear and perſpicuous: I really don't remember that I ever before met with an author whoſe opinions ſo exactly tallied with my own."

It was full half an hour after having made this obſervation, that he drank his cold coffee, and retired to his ſtudy to read and admire this excellent author, who had the good fortune to write exactly his opinions.

Mrs. Beauclerc, who had before appeared inclined to doze, now deſired Roſella to take down a book, and read to her.

"Yes, Madam," replied she, endeavoring to speak with alacrity: "what book shall it be?"

"Though Miss Beauclerc participated in her disappointment, she was much pleased with her good-humoured compliance: "I always told Selina," thought she, "that this dear girl had an unequalled sweetness of disposition."

"I think," said the old lady, gaping, and speaking with her eyes almost closed, "that as we have almost got through that fine discourse of Bishop Tillotson, we may as well conclude it: there cannot be many more pages I should suppose."

"About two or three and twenty, Ma'am," said Rosella, turning over the leaves.

"Very well, my dear; then we shall have time to finish it before I take my draught."

Rosella resigned herself to her destiny with a tolerable good grace, and instantly began the lecture, keeping a very exact account of the leaves as they faced about to the left.—"Five, six—very well," whispered she to herself, "I have not many more to get through—I shall soon have done."

On looking up at the close of the next paragraph, she saw Mrs. Beauclerc in a profound state of repose; and her daughter smiled encouragement and consolation to Rosella.

After an uninterrupted pause of a few seconds, the good lady drew a long breath, and half opening her eyes, "Bless me," exclaimed she, "I believe I almost forgot myself—yes, indeed, that is an excellent discourse—mark the page, my dear—I feel rather heavy.—Sophy, you had better take your evening walk—I shall ring for my draught when I awake."

Rosella

Roſella felt much relieved by this emancipation, though ſhe concluded that by her detention ſhe had miſſed the gratification ſhe had promiſed herſelf, as the ſun was now nearly beneath the horizon, and the breeze ſwept cool over the river. Miſs Beauclerc was of the ſame opinion; but when they ſtrolled out together, Roſella led to the hermitage, and ſhe followed.

"You have been very obliging, my dear child," ſaid ſhe, "to the inclinations of my poor mother; and to conſole us both for our confinement in the houſe ſuch a ſweet evening as this has been, you ſhall order your harp into our retreat, and give me my favorite ballad by moonlight."

Roſella had ſcarcely received this permiſſion, than ſhe flew back to the houſe, and having deſired a ſervant to bring the harp to the hermitage, returned to her friend with the ſame ſpeed. The inſtrument ſoon followed her, and the charming ballad, "Lady Alice," was performed in a ſtyle that enraptured Miſs Beauclerc: ſhe had had the voice of her *protegée* highly cultivated, becauſe heroines are always infallibly fine and pathetic ſingers, and the voice of Roſella was not unworthy the expence and the trouble which had been beſtowed upon it; ſo that the gentle correſpondents prided themſelves upon her poſſeſſing every requiſite to ſhine in the heroic page, except a penſive countenance; they hoped however that this deficiency would be no more, after an initiation of a few months into the ſublime diſtreſs of a gentle, fervent, everlaſting, but apparently unfortunate prepoſſeſſion.

Roſella continued to ſing, with a few interminations, that were filled up, by her, in admiration of the workmanſhip of her dear new harp,

which was a foreign one, and was ornamented with ſeveral figures exquiſitely finiſhed: but at length perceiving tne generous friend who had made her this ſuperb preſent, in a deep reverie, ſhe endeavored to draw her from it by repeating "Lady Alice." Miſs Beauclerc liſtened attentively, and a remembrance of the termination of her own hapleſs love, made her tears flow. A lighterman was dropping down the river, and the rude bawling of the men was in a moment huſhed in motionleſs ſurpriſe, and almoſt unconſcious admiration of the fair Siren, whoſe dulcet tones might have "created a ſoul under the ribs of death."

But theſe rough auditors were not the only captives to the harmony of Roſella, which father Thames had borne towards the hermitage: the noiſe of the lightermen had prevented her from obſerving the beautiful boat ſo anxiouſly watched for, which had glided to the bank of the lawn, and was there fixed by the magic of ſweet ſounds.

A few minutes after the pathetic exit of poor Lady Alice from this mortal coil, Roſella turned her eyes towards the river, and its undulating motion cauſed a part of the gilded ſtern of the boat to glitter on her eye.

"Ah, here it is!" exclaimed ſhe; "it is empty—where can they all be?—no, here are the rowers!"

She was then running to the water-ſide, but before ſhe could reach it, a ſcream from Miſs Beauclerc recalled her ſteps, and on regaining the hermitage, ſhe ſtopped at the entrance, from whence ſhe ſaw with ſurpriſe and conſternation, that her friend was ſurrounded by a party of gentlemen, who were tumultuouſly addreſſing many

many compliments to her, under the influence of a miſtake the twilight occaſioned.

" Charming creature !" exclaimed one of the ſet, who had ſeized the poor lady's hand, and thrown himſelf upon his knees with all the gallant inſpiration of Champagne; " divine girl ! whoſe ecſtatic notes may ſilence with envy the ſeraphic hoſt !"

" Bravo ! bravo !" echoed through the place from different mouths; " well ſaid, Ainſlie !"

Roſella remained trembling and confounded at the uproar, and juſt diſtinguiſhed the voice of Miſs Beauclerc, who endeavoured to be heard, when a tall figure advancing to her, ſaid, in tone ſcarcely audible—

" On a wrong ſcent, by G—d, the whole pack !" then ſeizing the arm of Roſella, he burſt into a half-ſmothered fit of laughter, and enquired if they were deifying the crabbed old maid, or her mother. " As for myſelf," continued this witty perſonage, " you ſee I can diſtinguiſh a Hebe from a tabby cat, though encompaſſed in the ſhades of night."

" Let go my hand, Sir," ſaid Roſella, endeavoring to diſengage it.

" Not I, faith," returned he, trying to catch the other.

She was terrified at this determined inſolence, and called to Miſs Beauclerc in a voice of affright, which attracted the attention of another individual of the intruding party, who haſtily ſtepped forward, and diſcovered to Roſella the countenance of Lord Morteyne.

" Forbear, Eſtcourt !" ſaid he, in a tone of authority: " how will you juſtify or excuſe this conduct ? If your riotous companions refuſe to liſten

liſten to me, you, at leaſt, ſhall not diſgrace yourſelf in my preſence."

He then ſeized the offender by the collar, a liberty of action this diſcerning genleman reſented, and a ſtruggle enſued, when he, probably from having drank more wine than Lord Morteyne, was ſoon thrown to the ground: but, alas! he encountered the unfortunate harp in his deſcent, and it fell with him upon the pebble-paved floor with a violent craſh. Roſella flew to examine if it had ſuſtained much injury, and found, to her inexpreſſible mortification, that it was ſo battered in one place, and wholly beat in in another, that ſhe had little hope the miſchief could ever be repaired.

"You have broken my new harp to pieces!" exclaimed ſhe, in an agony of grief, the tears ſpringing to her eyes.

"I feared ſo," returned Lord Morteyne; "and how I may deprecate your anger, I know not: I can only entreat you to believe, Madam, that I feel the utmoſt indignation for the inſolence of this intruſion, which I hope Miſs Beauclerc will believe I endeavored to prevent: but after having ſpent the afternoon in too much conviviality perhaps, ſhe will not be ſurpriſed that I had little influence in reſtraining a ſet of thoughtleſs young men, when I could ſcarcely myſelf reſiſt the attraction that drew them to this place."

Roſella attended little to this fine ſpeech; ſhe had, aſſiſted by him, raiſed her demoliſhed lyre, and was ſhedding tears over it, when her friend advanced to her, and enquired earneſtly why ſhe wept, and the reſt of the party demanded the ſame information of Mr. Eſtcourt, who was half ſtunned by his fall, and was leaning in a very

very ſullen poſture againſt the entrance of the hermitage.

" Heaven and earth !" exclaimed one of the intruders, " who has been committing this ſacrilege?"

" No more ſhe'll tune the vocal ſhell,
" To hills and dales her paſſion tell,
" A flame which time can never quell—"

A burſt of applauſe interrupted this amuſing quotation, which completely overcame the patience of Lord Morteyne, who had perhaps no inclination to incur the public or private enmity of Mr. Beauclerc, whoſe grounds adjoined to his own, and in whoſe power it would have been to have annoyed him extremely.

The indignation of Miſs Beauclerc, which had hitherto ſlumbered in the cheriſhed idea that Roſella would at leaſt gain three or four paſſionate admirers in the fray, was now equally rouſed ; but as ſhe attempted to give it utterance, ſhe was interrupted by his Lordſhip—

" Gentlemen," ſaid he warmly, " I inſiſt that you immediately retire ; this conduct is inſolent and unmanly. Permit me, ladies," added he, " to attend you towards the houſe."

" My Lord," replied Miſs Beauclerc, with an air of infinite dignity, " however your aſſociates may have deviated from the dictates of propriety and good breeding, I am not ſo unjuſt as to implicate your Lordſhip in their tranſgreſſion, and I thank you for this conſiderate propoſal ; but as I imagine theſe gentlemen are now ſatisfied with the alarm they have given Miſs Montreſor and myſelf, I will not trouble your Lordſhip to accompany us."

They then quitted the hermitage without oppoſition from the intruders, and ſoon gained the houſe ;

houſe; Miſs Beauclerc making no anſwer to the lamentations of Roſella for the poor harp, but repeating internally, with a rapture ſhe could ſcarcely reſtrain, "Yes, this is an adventure!"

In their abſence, Mrs. Beauclerc feeling her indiſpoſition increaſe, had retired to bed, and her huſband being ſtill in his ſtudy, Roſella and her friend found the drawing-room empty. Miſs Beauclerc diſcovering by the lights, that the eyes of Roſella were red with weeping, endeavored to conſole her by ſaying, that the poor harp might not be in ſo hopeleſs a ſtate as ſhe ſuppoſed: "and if ſo," added ſhe, "we will contrive to get it repaired without mentioning the diſaſter, or the circumſtance that occaſioned it, to my father."

Roſella was now compoſed enough to dread Mr. Beauclerc's animadverſions upon the folly of laviſhing expenſive preſents upon careleſs young girls, and readily acceded to the propoſal. Orders were iſſued to the old butler to convey the unlucky inſtrument into Miſs Beauclerc's dreſſing-room without being ſeen by his maſter; and as Simpſon had, on former occaſions, had the honor of being a confidential agent, he nodded, looked wiſe, and withdrew, but ſoon returned with the petrifying intelligence that the harp was no where to be found.

Miſs Beauclerc diſmiſſing old Simpſon, endeavored again to diminiſh the chagrin and conſternation of Roſella, by repreſenting that Lord Morteyne had moſt probably carried it away, with the hope of having it repaired; though in fact, ſhe imagined he meant to indulge the tender ſentiments that had taken poſſeſſion of his ſoul, by preſerving it as a relique which had

once

once been near the divinity at whoſe ſhrine he worſhipped.

" I wiſh," exclaimed Roſella with ſome vehemence, " the boat had been ſailing on the Black Sea! and then this misfortune would never have happened."

" But ſome other of more conſequence might," obſerved Miſs Beauclerc with a ſmile: " do you wiſh too that all the party had been in it?"

" No," replied Roſella, recollecting herſelf, " not all the party—nor any one of them indeed; but I hope you will allow that I have reaſon to be very much vexed, and ſo have you to be diſpleaſed: I ſhould be glad to know what Lord Morteyne would have thought of Mr. Beauclerc, if he had taken half a dozen rude men into his grounds to frighten his ſiſter, Lady Lucy?"

Her friend laughed internally to ſee her ſo much piqued. " Ah! my poor Roſella," thought ſhe, " 'tis the loſs of thy heart, and not of thy harp, that ſo much diſcompoſes thee!"

Miſs Beauclerc then left her to her regrets, real and imaginary, that ſhe might attend the invalid, whom ſhe found unuſually languid and fretful; and ſhe excuſed her appearance at the ſupper table, by ſaying ſhe would ſit up ſtairs till ſhe went to bed, as her mother was much indiſpoſed and very low.

Roſella, thus left *tête-à-tête* with Mr. Beauclerc, and not ſo much inclined to chat as uſual, ſuffered him to conduct the converſation, which turned upon the very youthful and cardinal virtues of prudence, ſteadineſs, and economy, all of which he hoped to ſee her one day poſſeſs. Roſella thanked him, and in her turn, wiſhed

ſhe might merit her generous friend's kindneſs and indulgence to her.

" Yes," returned the old man, " Sophia is indeed indulgent to you—too much ſo, I often tell her; however, I hope you will always be a good girl, and remember what you owe to her affection for you, and be prudent, and economical, and ſteady; in ſhort, be a good girl, and we will take care of you—that is, we ſhall not diſapprove what Sophy does to render you an accompliſhed and happy young woman: though I muſt ſay, I think that harp was an unneceſſary purchaſe; the old one would have done perfectly well. Seventy guineas only laſt year for a grand forte-piano! and now as much more for a harp! Oh, it's abſurd, it's extravagant! however, be a good girl—Sophy will not be controlled—but be a prudent girl, and I ſhall not be diſpleaſed at what ſhe does for you."

Roſella colored, and hung her head; her ſpirits already agitated, were painfully affected—the harp, this regretted extravagance, was demoliſhed, and appeared to juſtify the complaints of Mr. Beauclerc; whilſt the ſecret conſciouſneſs of it gave her a ſenſation of criminality, joined to the mortification ſhe experienced for the firſt time, at receiving benefits which parſimony would fain have withheld from her, and ſhe burſt into tears.

He had not intended to give her pain, and haſtened to relieve her diſtreſs by aſſuring her of his own affection for her, and that of Mrs. Beauclerc, deſiring at the ſame time, that ſhe would not take notice to Sophy of any thing he had ſaid, which Roſella readily promiſed.

The next morning ſhe was ſtill much out of ſpirits; the enticing curvets of poor Flirt, who was

was her conſtant companion, could not allure her to the uſual race upon the lawn, nor could ſhe endure to amuſe herſelf with her forte-piano, with the economical obſervations of Mr. Beauclerc ſtill freſh in her memory. Her abſence and dejection were remarked by her fanciful friend, who concluded after breakfaſt, a long *narrative letter* to *her Selina*, by obſerving, that Roſella had become penſive, and even melancholy.

" I too well gueſs the cauſe of this change," continued ſhe, " her fate now hangs upon this noble youth : the ſhaft was mutually felt, and both Morteyne and Roſella act under its influence."

Mr. Beauclerc had announced his intention of going to town, and returning before dinner, and enquired who would accompany him. Mrs. Beauclerc was too much indiſpoſed, Sophia remained at home with her, and at length it was ſettled that Roſella ſhould take the opportunity of paying a viſit of a few hours, to her guardian and Mrs. Ellinger. She felt very reluctant to renew her *tête-à-tête* with Mr. Beauclerc, but had not the courage to form an objection, when her friend deſired her to execute a few commiſſions which ſhe mentioned, and gave the packet to Selina in charge with her. Miſs Beauclerc then embraced her, bade her good morning, and Roſella followed her grandfather into the chariot.

Fortunately however, he was very buſily employed in examining a memorandum-book, and minuting down ſome recent expenditures ; and as he was going to ſettle with his banker, and receive ſome dividends from his funded caſh, his

ſpectacles

ſpectacles were never abſent from his noſe, his pocketbook from one hand, and his pencil from the other.

Roſella was pleaſed to be ſpared the repetition of this lecture upon prudence, economy, and ſteadineſs, and endeavoured to amuſe her mind with the paſſing objects; but the recent animadverſions of her companion, and her vexatious loſs, would occur to haraſs her ſpirits, in ſpite of her efforts to drive them from her recollection.

CHAP. VII.

Rage for refinement.

AS Mr. Beauclerc was going into the City, he left Roſella in Chancery-Lane, telling her he would call for her in three hours. She bade him farewel, and walked up ſtairs, with a gloomy remembrance of the many unpleaſant hours ſhe had paſſed in this den of parchments and perplexities.

Roſella opened the fitting-room door, and ſeeing it empty, proceeded up another flight of ſtairs to greet Mrs. Ellinger, who ſhe concluded was dreſſing; but before ſhe had entirely finiſhed her peregrination, ſhe met a ſervant maid, who informed her that Miſtreſs and Miſs Livy was ſot off to ſee ould Madam Swinney, who had been took vilent ill, and iſpected to die, as ſhe was already noteleſs.—Roſella expreſſed her ſorrow at this event, and meaſured back her ſteps to ſpeak to Mr. Ellinger at the office door.

He

He evinced more surprise than pleasure at this visit, which she soon learned was not very *à-propos*.

"My dear," said Mr. Ellinger, tying up a bundle of papers very carefully with the goose quill's regimental insignia, red tape, "my dear, you are unlucky in coming to-day, for my wife and daughter are not at home, and I am going to Gray's Inn Coffe-House to dine with a country client, so that we have only a bit of scrag of mutton for clerks and servants; but I will tell you what you shall do—Mr. Mordaunt cannot go out I know, for he has been confined to his house with a bilious complaint, and he was saying a few days ago, that he had not seen you for a long time, so you can go and pay him a visit, which will look attentive and pretty, and perhaps he will ask you to dine."

Rosella was on the point of replying that she was expected to return to Avelines to dinner, but she was fearful that she might then be made to remain at Mr. Ellinger's, entirely alone, and without the smallest resource against the *ennui* which had already taken possession of her; and she was besides really anxious to see her old friend, and she readily assented to the saving plan proposed to her.

"Let me see," said Mr. Ellinger, "you can't find your way alone, I suppose—and there again, William is not at hand—stay, you shall have Mr. Povey to show you to Mr. Mordaunt's house."

Mr. Povey was one of the articled clerks, then sitting in the office upon a high stool, facing a very dirty grim window, looking into a little paved court, where weeds and grass thrust up their presuming heads between the crevices,

crevices, to bask in the oblique rays of the morning sun, which condescended to visit them for about ten minutes, and then retired behind an immense high wall. In this court, the attention of Mr. Povey an his fellow scribes could only be diverted from business by a marvellous foul cinder heap, which the elevated notions of the lady of the mansion prevented her from observing: item an old wig block, item a dust tub, whose diurnal peregrinations generally terminated there to save trouble; so that it is not to be wondered at if Mr. Povey, on hearing his destination, jumped down from his stool, wiped his pen, snatched his hat from peg marked P. and bowed to Rosella with more alacrity than if he had been called from the employment of smoking the Hooka with houries in Mahomet's paradise. She returned his salutation with her usual good humour, and professed herself sorry to give him trouble; he was opening his mouth to reply with some gallantry, when Mr. Ellinger cut all complimenting, by desiring him to call at his friend the counsellor's, for them 'ere cases; "and stay," added the phlegmatic lawyer, "take these briefs, and that 'ere will and codicil back to Furnival's Inn, that is, after you have conducted Miss Montresor."

Mr. Povey thrusting the cases, briefs, will, and codicil into a green stuff bag, prepared with a less elated aspect to attend Rosella. After they had proceeded two or three streets, he shook his ears, hemmed, and placing his green burthen as much as possible out of sight, assisted his fair companion over a kennel, now choaked with dust, old mortar from a repaired house, odoriferous cabbage leaves, and putrid herrings.

"It's

" It's charmingly pleaſant, Ma'am," ſaid the young man, with a ſimper; " I think it is a pity not to walk out and take the air ſuch a day as this."

Roſella made no reply, for they had juſt then entered an alley, and ſhe was intent upon preſerving her eyes from a puff of wind that was whirling through it, and gathering into its vortex all the filth and ordure which ſtrewed the pavement.

" Are we almoſt arrived at —— Street?" aſked ſhe, on removing her hand from her face.

" Oh dear no, Ma'am; we have near a mile yet to walk—we croſs this ſtreet into that paſſage, and then———"

" Another alley!" exclaimed Roſella, again preparing to guard againſt the inconvenience of the firſt. The precaution was however uſeleſs, for no air could circulate at that moment through this abode of cloſeneſs and ſtench, on account of a mob collected to hear a loving pair ſoom the diſtinguiſhed atmoſphere of St. Giles's, roaring alternately the ſtanzas of a popular ballad.

" We muſt turn back," ſaid Roſella, haſtily.

" No, no, Ma'am," replied Mr. Povey, puſhing forward, " we ſhall ſoon get through; I never turn back for ſuch a handful of people as this."

Roſella tried to follow him; but not poſſeſſing either the ſtrength or the expertneſs of her conductor, and not underſtanding the arts of ſhuffling, hitching, and elbowing through a crowd, Mr. Povey was obliged to divide his attention between her and his parchment treaſure, and wholly overlooked a boxing match which

ſuddenly

ſuddenly began between the female warbler and her aſſociate, to favor the dexterity of ſome diving acquaintances who were mixed in the audience. Roſella, terrified at the blows which reſounded in her ears, and the language that defiled them, was now driven about at the will of thoſe who ſurrounded her, and ſoon loſt ſight of the green ſtuff bag and its maſter. At length, without any effort of her own, ſhe found herſelf diſengaged from the crowd, and puſhed into a ſpacious ſtreet, the name of which was hidden from her view by a projecting ſign that covered it.

Several moments paſſed before ſhe recovered ſufficient recollection to aſk of a woman paſſing by, the way to —— Street. The dame looked round her with tedious imbecility, and whilſt Roſella watched her countenance in eager enquiry, ſhe declared "ſhe did not know—ſhe could not tell for her part—ſhe was a ſtranger herſelf, and knew no more what all the turnings and the ſtreets were called, not ſhe, than the babe unborn."

Roſella, much diſappointed, walked on at the hazard of going wrong, but could not at that moment ſee any one near her to whom ſhe could ſummon courage to apply. There was not a coach-ſtand in ſight, and wholly unuſed as ſhe had been to walk in London without a companion or attendant, her embarraſſment was viſible both in her countenance and manner. At length, fearing that ſhe ſhould not have time to ſee Mr. Mordaunt if ſhe wandered far from the way, ſhe recollected reſolution to aſk information of a boy who was paſſing, with an immenſe pile of pewter pots ſtrung upon his back: for ſhe had looked into ſeveral ſhops, and unluckily

unluckily saw no person at leisure to attend to her; some were, or seemed to be empty, others were tenanted only by children, there was but one occupied by a person who appeared to be the master of it, and he looked at her as she peeped in, with such a savage mien of suspicion, that she withdrew in haste.

"The way to ——— Street," repeated the boy, turning round, "ay—it's a good way though—but I'll show you," resumed he, swinging the pots off his back, and dashing them on the pavement with a most stunning clutter. Before he could execute his intention however, or utter another syllable, he received a shower of blows from the cane of a man, whose feet his pots had aggrieved, accompanied by such a roundelay of oaths and execrations, that Rosella stood aghast in the utmost surprise and horror, wholly unable to account for the uproar: but the outcries of the poor boy soon gathered a circle of enquirers about him, and she left him to his fate, because she was unable to endure the heat and pressure of the people about her. She now felt uncommonly thirsty, and was much perplexed how to act, when a confectioner's shop greeted her eyes, and she recollected that she could at once enquire her way, and recompense the people for any little civility she might require of them, by laying out some money. A glass of capillaire was given to her at her request, and she took likewise some biscuits, of a sort she recollected Miss Beauclerc was fond of. But lo! on seeking for her purse, she found that it had vanished; her distress and confusion at this discovery were unsupportable, and while the color rushed into her cheeks, she made known her unexpected loss to a very showy lady,

lady, gaily dreſſed, who condeſcended to officiate behind the counter, and expreſſed her concern at the ſame time, that ſhe could not immediately pay for the capillaire.

" Oh dear Ma'am," ſaid the dame, with unlooked-for urbanity, " pray don't mention ſuch a trifle; I am only ſorry for you, Ma'am—I hope you have not loſt much?"

" Only a guinea and a few ſhillings," replied Roſella, " I had no more in my pocket."

" Well, Ma'am, that's too much to loſe, as people ſay; but pray don't mention it on my account; I dare ſay when you come this way again, you will not forget me."

" No, indeed," cried Roſella; " I will diſcharge my debt, and remember your civility with much gratitude."

She then enquired the way to ——— Street, and this polite ſhopkeeper ſtepped to the door to ſhow her the next turning, with as much complaiſance as if ſhe had juſt received an order for a ſuperb deſſert.

Whilſt Roſella was liſtening with great attention to her inſtructions, a voice cloſe to her ear exclaimed—

" Tis herſelf, by G—d! the Siren, the little hermit, the fair harper!"

She ſtarted with renewed confuſion, and wholly forgot in a moment which way ſhe was firſt to turn.

" Dear me, Ma'am," ſaid the dame, glancing a pair of keen black eyes upon two faſhionable looking men who were gazing with *nonchalente* ſatisfaction at the diſtreſs of Roſella, " you are not recovered yet; you had better walk in again, and ſit down a little: I am ſure if I had met

wet with ſuch an accident, I ſhould have been quite fluttered."

"What, another accident!" exclaimed one of the gentlemen in a voice Roſella recollected to be that of Mr. Eſtcourt; "what an unfortunate fair one!"

He ſpoke with an air of diſdainful raillery, which the remembrance of the laſt evening's diſgrace perhaps promoted, and the lady confectioner began to ſuſpect that this was far from being the firſt time that her moneyleſs cuſtomer had unexpectedly loſt her purſe; and abhorring the idea of being ſo groſsly impoſed on, ſhe drew Roſella, who was aſhamed to reſiſt, into her ſhop, ſaying—

"Come, Ma'am, you had better take another glaſs of capillaire, and then theſe young gentlemen, who ſeem to be friends of your's, will pay for both glaſſes, and you can return the money you know, when you find your purſe again."

"No," replied ſhe indignantly, "I will ſend a ſervant in leſs than half an hour, with the money."

"Very well, Ma'am, as you pleaſe, Ma'am," returned the dame, with re-aſſumed complaiſance, on finding that her hint was not taken by either party; "you are to take the ſecond turning on your right."

"I thank you," returned Roſella, haſtily leaving the ſhop with unaſſured ſteps.

One of the gentlemen, as ſhe hurried forward, accoſted her with tolerable politeneſs, whilſt his companion, Mr. Eſtcourt, by ſeveral rude innuendos, recalled the circumſtance that had ſo much ſhocked her, with added mortification to her mind. The color in her face heightened to the deepeſt crimſon, with heat and agitation;

tation; but the confusion of her mind prevented her from attending to personal inconvenience. At length her progress was impeded by a number of idle people gathered about a caricature shop: and as the insolence of her uncivil tormenter increased with her increasing anxiety, she felt unable to endure it any longer, and looking round, rushed suddenly into a haberdasher's near her, and unmindful who regarded her, sat down, and burst into tears. He had followed her; but on observing a very engaging and elegant young woman gazing at Rosella with strong marks of commiseration, he suddenly stopped with an air of surprise and confusion, which did not escape her. The young lady shook her head with a countenance of reprehension, and advancing to Rosella, offered her a bottle of salts with an air of such gentle compassion, that its influence revived her.

The people of the house, from her example, brought a glass of water; but the amiable stranger observing that Rosella was much heated, would not allow her to take it, and on seeing her more composed, she made a sign to Mr. Estcourt, who approached her, and having conversed with him in a whisper for a moment, at the entrance of the shop, he suddenly disappeared, and she returned to Rosella.

"My name is Estcourt, Ma'am," said she; "I have a carriage in waiting, and if you will do me the honor to use it, it shall attend you to any part of the town you wish to visit."

Rosella expressed her gratitude for this generous attention.

"No acknowledgments are due to me," replied Lady Lucy; "I ought rather to apologize to

to you for the impertinence of my thoughtleſs brother."

Roſella, with renewed thanks, ſaid that if a hackney coach could be procured, ſhe ſhould feel an equal obligation, without the fear of occaſioning any inconvenience: but this propoſition would not by any means be admitted, and Lady Lucy, on hearing that ſhe was going to the houſe of Mr. Mordaunt, led her to her carriage, and ordered it thither.

"Mr. Mordaunt," ſaid ſhe, as it drove away, "I am well acquainted with: he has tranſacted buſineſs in my family near thirty years, I believe, and notwithſtanding his gravity and preciſion, he is a great favorite with me."

Roſella joined very warmly her approbation and reſpect to that of Lady Lucy, who enquired if ſhe were on terms of intimacy with Mrs. Methwald, his ſiſter: her young companion replied that ſhe was ſcarcely known to her. A momentary ſmile paſſed over the countenance of Lady Lucy, who remained ſilent, and Roſella took advantage of a pauſe, to explain the accident by which Mr. Eſtcourt had met her unattended. His amiable ſiſter again aſſured her that ſhe bluſhed for his conduct.

"This is not," ſaid ſhe, "his firſt offence towards you, Miſs Montreſor, and that you ſhould this morning ſuffer renewed uneaſineſs from his folly, gives me much concern."

Roſella ſuppoſed that the broken harp was alluded to, and ſhe aſſerted, with truth, that the accident was much overbalanced by the flattering condeſcenſion of Lady Lucy. The carriage now ſtopped at the houſe of Mr. Mordaunt, who happened to be at home, and Roſella parted from her fair protectreſs with an undefined but deep

deep impreſſion of eſteem and admiration, which was likewiſe experienced by Lady Lucy, though not in ſo enthuſiaſtic a degree.

" Philip," ſaid Roſella to the ſervant who opened the door, " how is Mr. Mordaunt? I was much hurt to hear that he has been ill: may I ſee him?"

" I am partly ſure, Miſs," replied the man, who was a very old domeſtic, " that my maſter would be gladder to ſee you than any body, almoſt. But Mrs. Methwald is here, and if you pleaſe I will ſhew you into the drawing-room, and let my maſter know you are there."

Roſella, who had been uſed to run to him in his ſtudy, felt reſtrained: ſhe had ſeen Mrs. Methwald in her childhood, and ſtill retained a confuſed recollection of her, though it was by no means a pleaſing one. As Philip announced her, the old lady looked up, but without attempting to riſe: ſhe had been writing, and with the pen ſtill in her hand, and her *ſecretaire* before her, ſhe ſurveyed her young viſiter very earneſtly through her ſpectacles. Roſella, much abaſhed, expreſſed her fears that her intruſion was ill-timed.

" Is it poſſible," exclaimed Mrs. Methwald, " that you can be Roſella Montreſor?"

Roſella, not knowing in what manner to prove her identity, remained ſilent.

" You are grown out of knowledge," continued the lady: " but," added ſhe, recollecting herſelf, " my ſurpriſe has betrayed me into giving you a ſtrange reception—ſit down, my dear—I am happy to ſee you."

She graciouſly held forth her hand, which Roſella received with ſome diffidence of deſerving the honor, and then ſhe ventured to aſk if Mr.

Mr. Mordaunt was recovered from his indiſpoſition.

"Not entirely," Mrs. Methwald ſaid; "Philip told him," continued ſhe, "of courſe, that you are here, and when he is entirely diſengaged, he will no doubt ſee you."

She now arranged the papers in her *ſecretaire*, and taking up a book, from which ſhe appeared to have been making extracts, ſhe marked the page, and placed every thing aſide, but in a manner that plainly told Roſella ſhe had been diſturbed from her employment by her preſence, and meant to reſume it the inſtant ſhe was relieved from it. From this moment, to the entrance of her brother, ſhe labored to keep up a converſation with her young gueſt, who not being acquainted with the chit chat reports of the day, and not being imagined qualified for any ſuperior ſubject, did not make a very brilliant figure. The entrance of Mr. Mordaunt, who welcomed her with his uſual frankneſs and affection, relieved her from a ſituation, of all others the moſt unpleaſant, herſelf reſtrained, and conſcious of being a *gêne* to others.

"You have before ſeen this good child I think," ſaid he to his ſiſter; "but you had no idea that you ſhould ſo ſuddenly renew acquaintance with ſuch a tall, handſome girl?"

"Miſs Montreſor is certainly much grown," returned the lady, coldly, "and I ſuppoſe—I believe much improved in appearance; ſhe is vaſtly like her father."

"How is poor Mrs. Beauclerc?" demanded Mr. Mordaunt, haſtily; "I hear ſhe is ill."

Roſella confirmed the report. He then enquired how long ſhe remained in town, and having heard until three o'clock, obſerved that it

was

was already near half after two, and asked why she had not called sooner. She took this opportunity of telling the tale of her disasters, and Mr. Mordaunt, much provoked with the conduct of her guardian, in entrusting her to such an incompetent protector as Mr. Povey, relieved one part of her inquietude, by sending Philip to the confectioner, to perform the promise she had given: and then recollecting how short a time remained for her stay in town, he ordered his carriage to take her back, and whilst it was getting ready, demanded what the larder could produce.

"Rosella will not dine," said he, "probably till six, and Miss Beauclerc will not trust her here again, if I send her home hungry and sick."

Mrs. Methwald said she would ring for something; but observed at the same moment, that she believed there were biscuits in the anti-room.

"Pho, pho," returned her brother, "a farthing biscuit for a young girl half famished! Do suffer your darling Muses," continued he, glancing his eye at the *secretaire*, "to regale for once with the smell of cold roast or boiled."

Rosella interrupted him to declare that she had no inclination for either.

"Child," said Mr. Mordaunt, "I am at this time suffering a painful malady, which arose to its present height from the folly of preserving my appetite from nine in the morning until five and six in the evening; and I recommend it to you never to suffer a foolish complaisance or punctilio, to place you in the same predicament. I shall take some refreshment myself, if it is to be had, and I hope you will not refuse to follow my example."

He

He then rung the bell himſelf, and gave orders; whilſt Mrs. Methwald, with a countenance extremely diſconcerted, locked up the precious contents of the *ſecretaire*, and ſent it to her apartment.

Roſella, at this moment, wiſhed herſelf at Avelines;—ſhe wiſhed herſelf any where, even at Mr. Ellinger's diſmal manſion, rather than be compelled to partake of a repaſt that was not beſtowed with cordiality, or meet a phyſiognomy forced every other minute into a momentary ſimper, which, like gleams of ſunſhine in a winter-day, gave way per force, to the more prevailing gloom.

Mr. Mordaunt paid no attention to the ill-concealed diſpleaſure of his ſiſter, but ſat down to the tray which the ſervant brought, and obliged Roſella to ſhare the contents with him. Mrs. Methwald would not be prevailed with to have the ſame condeſcenſion, but ſat as far from the ſcene of action as poſſible, and the inſtant her brother and his copartner in this vulgar buſineſs had ended, ſhe deſired that the fragments might be taken away, and flew herſelf to open the doors and windows, that the ſmell of the meat might evaporate. Roſella, ſtill more diſtreſſed than at her entrance, began to anticipate with delight the moment of her departure, and for the firſt time ſince ſhe had loſt ſight of Mr. Povey, reflected, that as he could not poſſibly gueſs what had become of her, he might have informed Mr. Ellinger that ſhe was loſt, who perhaps would ſpread the alarm to Mr. Beauclerc when he called for her in Chancery-Lane. This fear made her yet more eagerly wiſh to hear the carriage announced, and at length her apprehen-

ſions were allayed by the agreeable intelligence that it was ready.

" Philip, you will attend Miſs Montreſor," ſaid Mr. Mordaunt.

" Thomas is below," obſerved Mrs. Methwald, with a nervous motion of the head, and a fretful fidget."

" I ſuppoſe ſo," returned her brother, provoked at her childiſh contradictions, " and there let Thomas remain."

Roſella haſtily roſe to depart. Mrs. Methwald, checking her peeviſhneſs, took her hand, and touched her cheek with her own condeſcending lips.

" My dear child," ſaid Mr. Mordaunt, " you muſt not be frightened from renewing your viſit by my ſiſter's unlucky diſcompoſure this morning."

Mrs. Methwald darted at him a look of anger.

" I beg you to believe," added he, " that ſhe is very friendly and good-humoured, and I aſſure you has your welfare much at heart: but I ſuppoſe the truth is, that ſhe found the hill of Parnaſſus ſteeper than uſual this morning, and perhaps too, the heat of the weather has dried up the helicon fountain, at which I believe my good ſiſter ſips now and then."

" Abſurd!" exclaimed the old lady.

Roſella now courteſied to her, and bidding Mr. Mordaunt adieu, ran down ſtairs, glad to eſcape from the peeviſh preciſion of this ancient votary of the Muſes. On arriving at the houſe of Mr. Ellinger, ſhe was met in the paſſage by the knight of the green ſtuff bag, who eagerly ran out to inform her that he had with difficulty traced her as far as the corner of —— Street, and ſeen her run into the haberdaſher's; and as he

he then thought her safe, he turned back to execute his other commissions.

"Mr. Ellinger does not then know the little embarrassment I met with?" said she.

"No, Ma'am," replied Povey, coloring, "I thought as you was safe, there was no occasion to mention it, as perhaps he might think I ought——"

Rosella now understood him, and relieved his apprehension, by saying she was pleased to find there had not been any needless alarm; and as she had fortunately arrived safe at her destination, there would not be any necessity to speak of it. She then walked up stairs to wait the appearance of Mr. Beauclerc, and discovered to her mortification, that Mr. Povey thought it necessary to atone for his late negligence, by following her into the dining-room, because he was afraid she would be dull by herself; and for his part, he was not fit to sit down to "aforesaids and whereases," after taking such a fag in such a devilish hot day.

Rosella was silent.

"After you had entered the carriage, Ma'am," continued he, "I thought ——"

"Oh you saw that?" interrupted Rosella with some surprise.

"Yes, Ma'am; I was following you, but I spied the livery—confound it, says I, here's my luck again! I never touch this damned green devil, but I meet some of my old friends: there was Cyril Estcourt and I at Westminster school, like two brothers; we were always together at my uncle's, or at the house of Lord Morteyne, his father. But when my uncle took the whim to article me to old Ellinger, that I might understand common law, all my friends cut me,

damme, or what's almoſt as bad, they hoax me to the devil for being a lawyer's clerk: however, they may come round again one of theſe days, for I ſhall only do buſineſs in the ſoliciting way —in my uncle's track, with two or three ſnug auditorſhips. Zounds! the haunches of veniſon and fat turtles that fall into his larder—Lord, Ma'am, he is as much courted as a Prime Miniſter."

"Pray may I aſk on what particular account?" ſaid Roſella, who found ſhe was expected to ſpeak.

"Why, he carries in the rents of ſuch of his noble patrons who have rents to receive, and contrives that others who have none, ſhall live upon his wits and his credit."

"I am ſorry I cannot underſtand you," ſaid Roſella; "and I am ſo ignorant of buſineſs of every kind, that I fear I ſhould not comprehend you even if you endeavour to explain to me."

"I cannot think," returned Povey, with an air of chagrin, "what induces me to talk upon ſuch quizzing ſubjects, except it is the confounded air of this houſe. I dare ſay now, if I was to meet Lady Lucy, or Cyril, or any of them, they would pronounce me already quite an altered fellow."

"Lady Lucy is extremely amiable!" exclaimed Roſella earneſtly.

"As ſweet a tempered little creature as any in the world," returned he: "now *I* met her once a ſhort time after I was articled, and I felt confounded fooliſh to be ſure—for there was a curſed load of red-taped papers ſtaring her full in the face. Mr. Povey," ſaid ſhe, "we never ſee you now: my father was remarking yeſterday that you had deſerted us. I could have told her

her that Cyril had hoaxed me off the field, but I was so chagrined that the devil of a word could I utter; however, when I meet her, she always bows, let it be where it will: and her taking you to old Mordaunt's was just like her—she would almost have done the same thing for a girl fagging with a band-box."

Mr. Beauclerc's chariot now drove to the door, and Rosella, who was not much delighted with her companion, bade him good morning with great alacrity, and flew down stairs with even more than the usual eagerness she ever felt to quit the house. She found Mr. Beauclerc in extreme good humour; but the spectacles and memorandum-book were still in constant employment. She reminded him of the commissions her friend had given her, and was desired to direct the coachman as she pleased, provided she did not order him much out of the way.

CHAP. VIII.

Palsy—gout—and rage for improvements.

WHEN the carriage drove round the sweep that led to the front entrance at Avelines, Rosella looked up at the dressing-room windows of Miss Beauclerc, and to her extreme surprise, this beloved friend was not watching for her return—a custom that had hitherto been invariable with her. The servant who had attended the chariot had rung twice, and the doors were yet shut against their master.

"I hope

" I hope no accident has happened!" ejaculated Roſella in a low yet diſtinguiſhable voice.

" What is it—what is the matter?" aſked Mr. Beauclerc, taking off his ſpectacles, and looking up.

Old Simpſon now appeared with a face of important concern.

" I am ſure Miſs Beauclerc is ill!" cried Roſella, ruſhing into the houſe, and flying up ſtairs with a ſtep equally rapid. The ſight of the family apothecary walking down with a very ſolemn air, confirmed all her fears. " Oh I thought ſo," ſaid ſhe—" I feared ſo! Tell me, is ſhe very ill?"

" I am apprehenſive, Miſs Montreſor," returned the gentleman in meaſured accents—

" Of what?" interrupted Roſella, turning very pale.

" That the poor lady is in a very critical ſituation."

She heard no more, but ran with incredible ſwiftneſs to the apartment of Miſs Beauclerc, which ſhe was ſurpriſed to find wholly deſerted.

" Where is ſhe?" exclaimed the weeping girl, " where is my beſt and only friend?"

" Lord, Miſs," ſaid Sophia's maid, who juſt then entered, " you cannot mean my old Lady ſure—and as for *my* Lady, why you know ſhe is tending her."

Roſella inſenſibly loſt her inconſolable countenance.

" There, Ma'am," continued the toilet damſel, " my old maſter and you hadn't been gone half an hour, before my poor old Lady was taken all in ſuch a queer way—like—and *my* Lady ſhrieked out, and pulled the bell, fit to pull it down—and we all ran, and there was my poor

poor old Lady had tumbled down upon the carpet, and was making faces—like—all in such a queer way. So Will was sent off to Hampton-Court for the doctor, and John set off to fetch back his master, and bring Doctor Watkins, and there he is not come back yet."

"Do you think I may go to Mrs. Beauclerc's chamber?" asked Rosella; "could not I do any good?—perhaps I might relieve my dear Miss Beauclerc?"

"Ah poor dear lady!" said the suivante, "she has been in a pack of troubles; I'll go and ask if you may see my old Lady."

Rosella waited with impatience for her return; but the request was denied, for Miss Beauclerc wished that she might, if possible, be spared the shock of seeing her mother in her present deplorable state, and it had been recommended besides, to keep her as quiet as circumstances would admit.

The old lady languished six-and-thirty hours in a state of insensibility, and at the end of that period, a second fit released her daughter and her husband from their melancholy attendance. But the sudden alarm of her danger, and the shock of her death, affected the health of Mr. Beauclerc, and occasioned a fit of the gout, to which he had been some time subjected; and the regret of Sophia for the loss of her mother, was much diverted by her attention to her sick father, in which Rosella joined with all the tenderness and ardor natural to her character.

A few days after the funeral of Mrs. Beauclerc, their cares were however frustrated by intelligence received by the invalid, of the sudden failure of his banker, to whom he had recently entrusted a considerable sum of money, but

but not enough to injure him in the ſlighteſt manner, or in the leaſt embarraſs his affairs. Yet the avarice of the old man was cruelly wounded by the ſtroke, and the agitation of his mind upon this event, threw the gout into his head, and proved fatal to him.

Sophia, worn with anxiety and attendance, was now herſelf aſſailed by illneſs; and only the tears and diſtreſs of Roſella had the power of rouſing her ſpirits to fortitude and exertion.

The neareſt relation of Miſs Beauclerc on the ſide of her father, was a firſt couſin who reſided in Devonſhire upon a ſmall eſtate, and had ſeldom viſited his uncle, becauſe he had no expectations from him. Of her mother's family, the moſt approximate to her was Mrs. Mary Delaval, the ſiſter of Mrs. Beauclerc, who having in her youth met with a ſenſible diſappointment, had declined ſome advantageous matches, and had imbibed ſo ſtrong a friendſhip for a woman of rather an inferior ſituation in life, who had had complaiſance enough to conſole the poor damſel by liſtening with patience to her tale of woe, and playing everlaſtingly at piquet with her, that Miſs Delaval, poſſeſſing a handſome independence, took up her abode at the houſe of her comforter, and followed her and her huſband, a wary Scotchman, to Dumfries, where he choſe to return to ſpend the income of a ſmall fortune he had ſcraped together in England. A very kind letter was interchanged once a year between Miſs Beauclerc and her aunt, and this annual correſpondence was the only intercourſe preſerved by the good lady with her family.

Beſides theſe relatives, Miſs Beauclerc had three or four ſecond and third couſins, with whom

whom she was upon formal terms; and finding herself thus suddenly called upon to act from her own judgment and discretion, she wrote to entreat the presence of Mr. Mordaunt, that she might have the benefit of his friendly instructions; and at the same time desired the attendance of Mr. Ellinger in his professional capacity.

A mandate was likewise issued to Selina, that her eloquence and personal consolation might sooth the griefs of her distressed correspondent: and when this first task was accomplished, that she might join in the more delicious one of sketching out a variety of intricate and mazy destinies for the unconscious Rosella, who, entirely innocent of the forced-meat adventures laid in her name upon the shelf for Fortune's better leisure, was fervently blessing Heaven that her indulgent friend was still on the surface of this trumpery globe; and wondering much, how that time would henceforth be filled, which had till then been devoted to the excellent discourses of Bishop Tillotson, to the screech-owl night-thoughts, to prosing, to political pamphlets, and to the examination of account-books and cash memorandums.

The will of Mr. Beauclerc had been deposited with Mr. Ellinger, and a copy of it, sealed up, was found in his escrutoire, with an intimation where the original was placed. Mr. Mordaunt, at the request of Sophia, was present at the reading of it, as was likewise Rosella, who was supposed to be a legatee. The nephew of the deceased had been written to in form, but no answer had been received; and Mr. Ellinger proposed that the will should be opened without delay, that it might be seen if instructions had

been left for the interment of the body. This expectation was not disappointed, and the testator then proceeded to dispose of his property. According to the general idea, Miss Beauclerc was the heiress of his estates and all his personals; but the sentence that followed was equally unexpected and unwelcome to her. It imported, that his daughter had lately rejected an alliance he had been anxious to obtain for her, and unless she altered her situation in favor of the Honorable Mr. Treson, or some other gentleman of family and probity, he willed that his estates should descend, at her demise, to his nephew John Bristock, of Girton-place, in the county of Devon, or to his heirs, on taking the surname of Beauclerc. Then followed a few legacies, amongst which, the most considerable was a bequest of one thousand pounds to Rosella, *commonly called* Montresor.

"Commonly called Montresor!" repeated Rosella internally: "that is a mistake, for I am most commonly called Rosella." She was extremely delighted when the conclusion of this business liberated her friend from a scene which had appeared to agitate her considerably. Mr. Mordaunt too, had seemed much chagrined, she thought, and had put on a most tremendous frown during the latter part of the reading: nor could she avoid observing, that even Mr. Povey, who had accompanied Mr. Ellinger as his *aid-du-camp*, on pronouncing her name, given with such legal gravity, looked up with an inquisitive leer, hesitated, half-simpered, then recollecting himself, hemmed, and proceeded with a repetition of the words "Rosella, commonly called Montresor."

Miss

Miſs Beauclerc had an immediate conference with Mr. Mordaunt in her dreſſing-room, and Roſella retired to her own apartment, repeating, as ſhe threw herſelf into a chair, "commonly called Montreſor!" The more this form ſtruck her imagination, the more ſtrange it appeared; but at length ſhe remembered to have ſeen the words applied to others, yet without recollecting on what occaſion, and ſuppoſed they were uſed by formal people, either to expreſs contempt or reſpect, ſhe could not exactly define which, nor did ſhe ten minutes after much wiſh to diſcover.

The *tête-à-tête* of Miſs Beauclerc and her old friend was long, and Roſella obſerved that when ſhe rejoined her, ſhe had been in tears; but her careſſes and expreſſions of affection were uncommonly tender, and the returning fondneſs of her child ſoothed her affliction, which Roſella was careful not to renew, by preferring any queſtion which would lead her mind back to the circumſtance that had apparently excited it.

When Mr. Mordaunt left Avelines, he took leave of Roſella with a greater indication of friendſhip and regard than he had ever yet ſhown her; but his conduct to Miſs Beauclerc was cold and ceremonious, and created ſuch a reſtraint in every one, that his abſence was a relief to her ſpirits.

Mrs. Ellinger obeyed the ſummons of her correſpondent two days after the funeral, and their long and private converſations ſoon removed the chagrin that had taken poſſeſſion of Miſs Beauclerc from the period of the examination of the will. Fond as ſhe was of Roſella, and delighted as Mrs. Ellinger ſtill continued to be, to admire with prognoſticating gaze the daily improv-

ing

ing charms of the *child of ſentiment*, this darling girl was invariably excluded from their confidential *têtes-à-têtes*, which in leſs than a week, began to encroach upon more than half the time of Roſella's indulgent friend. She was therefore compelled to amuſe herſelf as well as ſhe could without a companion, excepting Flirt, and ſhe hourly regretted the loſs of her harp, which Miſs Beauclerc had not replaced by any other. Roſella was too delicate to hint a wiſh, that might appear to force the further liberality of one to whom ſhe had already ſuch infinite obligations; and ſhe was perfectly convinced that it would be a very uſeleſs effort to apply to Mr. Ellinger for an expenſive ſuperfluity.

Her piano-forte, and very long rambles with Flirt, who was her chaperone and play-fellow, became her principal reſources againſt *ennui*. The anger and regret which a ſight of the hermitage always occaſioned, prevented her from repoſing herſelf there after a walk round the grounds, and ſhe preferred being half-baked under an autumnal ſun, in a ſmall tub ſummer-houſe at the other extremity of the lawn, where ſhe contrived to make room for Mr. Flirt, who lay very lovingly at her feet, panting with heat, and not able to comprehend why he was forbidden to enter the ſhades of the proſcribed retreat.

One morning however, when the correſpondents had withdrawn after breakfaſt, and taken with them from the library, a voluminous "Tour through Great Britain," Roſella ſat down to her inſtrument, the ſounds of which could be diſtinguiſhed in Miſs Beauclerc's dreſſing-room.

"Charming

" Charming creature!" exclaimed Mrs. Ellinger with enthuſiaſm, " what a delightful finger—what a heavenly voice!"

" My dear Selina," ſaid Miſs Beauclerc, " do you really think ſhe excels? To me I muſt confeſs ſhe appears to ſing enchantingly."

" And then," cried Mrs. Selina, " her figure! her hair! her eyes! her complexion! her hands!"

" I muſt own," interrupted the enraptured mother, " I think ſhe is beautiful."

" Beautiful!" ſcramed the gentle Mrs. Ellinger in the accents of an inſpired prieſteſs of Delphos, " ſhe muſt be angelic, ſince even that old hottentot Mordaunt ſays ſhe is lovely."

Poor Miſs Beauclerc burſt into tears of delight, and preſſed the hand of the panegyriſt, whoſe eulogiums and epithets were ſtill flowing with unebbing fulneſs, when they were ſuddainly interrupted by ſounds which ſeemed to reſemble the chords of a harp ſtruck in haſte.

" What can this mean?" exclaimed Miſs Beauclerc; and the expreſſion being echoed by her companion, they both hurried to the apartment from whence theſe unexpected ſounds proceeded, where they diſcovered Roſella almoſt dancing with ecſtacy round a ſuperb harp, and ſo much occupied with her admiration, that ſhe did not immediately obſerve their entrance.

" From whence did this come?" aſked Mrs. Ellinger, caſting an expreſſive look at her friend.

" Oh my too indulgent Miſs Beauclerc," cried Roſella, not attending to the queſtion, " how kind you are! I am ſure this muſt have been very expenſive—I am afraid it coſt too much money," added ſhe, recollecting the admonition of Mr. Beauclerc.

" Not

"Not of mine," returned her friend, repaying with intereſt the meaning ſmile of *her Selina*, "I aſſure you I have nothing to do with the affair."

Simpſon was immediately ſummonded: but to the numerous interrogations he received, he could only anſwer that a man brought the inſtrument in a caravan to the ſtable-yard door, and merely ſaying he had brought the young lady's harp home, made the coachman help him out with it, and went off without another word. The ſimper on Mrs. Ellinger's countenance almoſt degenerated into a grin at this recital, and Miſs Beauclerc was as much delighted as when poor Raymond had firſt ſlipped a *billet-doux* into her hand, after her father had rejected his overtures; whilſt Roſella, far from crediting her diſclaiming ſpeech, imagined that ſhe had thus conducted this pleaſing circumſtance to increaſe her ſatisfaction by ſurpriſe, and alternately careſſed Miſs Beauclerc and the newly-recovered treaſure, until Selina, no longer able to contain her annotations, drew her friend back to her dreſſing-room, that they might freely congratulate each other upon this indubitable proof of the attachment of Lord Morteyne; for they could not entertain a doubt but that he was the author of this gallantry, and it had a conſiderable effect upon the plans they were laying down with ſuch eager zeal.

Whatever the plans were however, it was agreed that they could not be effected before the ſpring was tolerably advanced; and the invention of the two ladies was now very worthily employed in finding out the beſt method of paſſing the intervening time. Miſs Beauclerc, on inſpecting her inheritance, found herſelf poſſeſſed of an income far exceeding her utmoſt expectations:

pectations: independent of the eſtates of her father, he had amaſſed a large ſum of money, which he had laid out to great advantage, and had purchaſed not only Avelines, but the houſe in town. Mr. Mordaunt never refuſed his advice to the mother of Roſella, and ſhe found Mr. Ellinger a man of profeſſional integrity; ſo that her affairs were ſoon ſettled to her ſatisfaction.

No longer ſhackled in her views, ſhe beſpoke, by the recommendation of *Selina*, an elegant open carriage, and hired another for uſe whilſt it was building. It was drawn by a beautiful pair of foreſters, and Roſella received inſtructions from the coachman, that ſhe might become an expert charioteer. Miſs Beauclerc likewiſe ſent her twice a week to a riding-ſchool, to learn to ſit a horſe with grace, and a very fine one was purchaſed for her at an extravagant price.

All theſe unlooked-for indulgences intoxicated the young mind of Roſella with a happineſs never before experienced. She laughed, danced, ſung, careſſed Miſs Beauclerc, and thought Mrs. Ellinger more agreeable in this viſit to Avelines, than ſhe could ever remember her to have been before. The keen delight attending theſe new occupations had not much abated, when her attention was ſtill further amuſed, by learning that her kind friend had bought ſome meadow-land adjoining the grounds, which were to be beautified and enlarged. Nothing could now be done without a landſcape gardener. R —— was ſent for, plans were made, and Roſella ſuffered to have a voice in rejecting or accepting them. It was diſcovered that the houſe muſt undergo a complete alteration, and that a library and greenhouſe muſt open on to

the lawn—that is, a lady's library and a lady's greenhouſe. Under the ſhade of ſome fine cheſnut-trees a fanciful dairy was to be erected in the form of a bungalo. Roſella was already conſtituted dairy-maid in chief, and an expenſive dairy-ſet actually beſpoke at Wedgewood's.

What a variety of charming amuſements all in ſucceſſion! Poor Flirt, though ſtill extremely cheriſhed, was rivalled by the long-tailed foreſters, whoſe wavy manes wantoned in the wind like the careleſs treſſes of their ſmiling miſtreſs, and who, flattered by the advances ſhe had made to win their friendſhip, willingly obeyed the fair hand which ſo often patted encouragement and approbation.

At length Mrs. Ellinger, eager that Roſella ſhould exhibit her new acquirement, truſted herſelf to the ſkill and docility of the ponies; and as ſhe directed which way they ſhould take, they drove of courſe, immediately paſt the houſe of Lord Morteyne, near which the public road happened to ſweep. The mourning of the ſervant, and the black dreſs of the young lady, Mrs. Ellinger concluded would ſufficiently indicate who they were, and ſhe expected to ſee the ſighing ſwain dart from behind ſome ſpreading oak to catch a paſſing glance of his lovely miſtreſs: nay, ſhe almoſt wiſhed the horſes to take fright (a little) or the carriage to overturn (gently) that an accident ſo opportune might create heroic ſervices, an obligation of eternal gratitude in return for them, and all thoſe tender ſentiments which a charming heroine and a handſome hero muſt experience from ſuch a touching adventure.

They had almoſt quitted Lord Morteyne's demeſnes however, without encountering him, and

and Mrs. Ellinger had nearly given up the hope of beholding the paſſionate lover, when at an angle in the road they met a jaunting car, filled with a very lively party, ſome of whom were leaping from the machine, and on to it again, as it rolled forward: and, Oh degeneracy of the age! the man, who ought to have employed his ſolitary moments in wafting innummerable ſighs to the broad-faced moon, was conducting this care-killing party, and joining in their mirth!

The road happened to be narrow where the carriages met, and Lord Morteyne very politely drew up his horſe, to give Roſella more room, who feeling the timidity of inexperience, checked her foreſters, and gave the whole party an opportunity of ſurveying her as ſhe ſlowly paſſed. Mrs. Ellinger was all obſervation, all ear, but ſhe was not ſo much occupied as to forget to act a diſtinguiſhed part in the ſcene: not content with performing the intereſting matron, ſhe undertook to perſonate likewiſe the woman of diſtinction, and made herſelf ſo extremely conſpicuous in both characters, that it was impoſſible ſhe could be overlooked.

The oppoſite groupe were divided into two parties of gazers; the men criticized Roſella, and the woman amuſed themſelves with the airs of her companion, whoſe growing indignation was rather qualified by obſerving ſome expreſſive glances of approbation caſt towards the heroine.

Lady Lucy, who was in the car, bowed to Roſella with her uſual complacency; and ſhe feeling gratified and happy by this mark of recognition, returned the compliment with a cheek dimpled over with ſmiles.

When

When the enemy were out of ſight, "Miſs," ſaid the coachman, with an air of chagrin, "you mought have paſſed that queer thing without pulling up; there was a foot or two to ſpare I know."

"Yes, John," replied Roſella, "but I was afraid."

"No," thought Mrs. Ellinger, triumphantly, "no, my amiable Roſella, it was not fear you experienced, it was *ſentiment*; and ſhortly your infant paſſion will develope itſelf to your conviction!"

The infant paſſion was however yet ſo extremely in embryo, that Roſella was not at all conſcious of it; but converſed with her uſual freedom and gaiety for the remainder of the ride, only recurring to the adventitious meeting, by expreſſing a warm admiration of Lady Lucy Eſtcourt.

"Eſtcourt!" repeated Mrs. Ellinger: "humph—drive home, my dear; I have recollected ſomething which I wiſh to communicate to your friend immediately."

Roſella, accuſtomed to this lady's ſingular mode of ſpeaking, paid no attention to her exclamation, but complied with her requeſt. Miſs Beauclerc had been really anxious for their return, as it was the firſt time Roſella had diſplayed her new acquirement on the public road; ſhe trembled leſt they had met with an accident and was looking out for them when they ſtopped at the door.

"Don't come down," cried Mrs. Ellinger eagerly; "I wiſh to ſpeak to you in your dreſſing-room."

Miſs

Miſs Beauclerc ſmiled, and caſt a glance of ſatisfied approbation at the unconſcious object of all this myſterious ſolicitude.

CHAP. IX.

A heroine traveſty—and a heroine unhorſed.

THE workmen ſoon began their operations both on the houſe and grounds; and Roſella finding herſelf extremely intereſted in their progreſs, was ſoon *à portèe* to act as overſeer and directreſs. When the alterations began to be apparent, the curioſity of the people in the neighbourhood, induced them to viſit as much of the place as was open to their inſpection; and at length, a billet was given to Miſs Beauclerc from Lady Lucy Eſtcourt, requeſting permiſſion to walk over the improvements with three or four friends.

An aſſent was immediately returned, and Roſella deſired to pay attention to Lady Lucy's party—a mandate which ſhe readily promiſed to obey. That day however, and two more paſſed over, and not a creature from the houſe of Lord Morteyne availed themſelves of the circumſtance, to improve their growing flames with a nearer view of the object that inſpired them. The gentle Selina then became very impatient, and even rather indignant, that Lord Morteyne himſelf ſhould miſs ſo fair an opportunity for an impromptu declaration of everlaſting

ing tenderneſs and attachment; and even Miſs Beauclerc began to fear that ſhe had, in marking down this conqueſt, paid too high a compliment to the charms of her beloved girl; whilſt Roſella herſelf, having expected with ſome eagerneſs the promiſed moment of renewing an intercourſe, however tranſitory, with Mr. Povey's *beſt little creature in the world*, forgot her diſappointment on the third day, and purſued her office of ſuperintendent of the works, with her accuſtomed ardor.

The wind was high, and beſides diſordering her hair, had wafted her hat into the urn of the river god which was flowing near her: a nail in an old plank had caught her muſlin dreſs, and having rent it the whole length of the ſkirt, retained a large fragment of it, which waved like a banneret to and fro in the air, and the reſt trailed after her in ſullen ſtate; and to conclude with her diſaſters, ſhe had, in jumping from a ha! ha! into the newly-purchaſed meadow-land, popped one of her feet into ſome black mud, which had communicated from her ſhoes to her petticoats, and extremely diſcolored them: but unmindful of ſuch trifles, Roſella continued to amuſe herſelf, and was helping a little boy belonging to one of the workmen, to wheel ſome loom in a hand-barrow, when ſhe was ſuddenly overtaken, and moſt unexpectedly, by Lady Lucy and her three or four friends, amounting to nearly a dozen, including her two brothers, Lord Morteyne and Mr. Povey's *ci-devant* friend Cyril Eſtcourt.

Roſella haſtily quitted her occupation, and the blood flew to her cheeks, as ſhe ſurveyed with a momentary glance the diſorder of her adjuſtment. Lady Lucy ſeemed fearful of diſtreſſing

treſſing her by ſubjecting her to the regards of her companions, and with a courteſy was paſſing on, when the following disjointed phraſes caught the ear of Roſella from the train that followed her.

" A confounded handſome hoyden—the Jordan might take a leſſon here—deviliſh pity—a fine girl, faith—ruſtic you muſt own—yes yes—a *belle ſauvage*." Accompanied by an aſſortment of ſhrugs and grimaces to denote contempt, compaſſion, or faint admiration.

Her pride was piqued, and her reſentment rouſed by ſuch a ſtring of comments, uttered juſt loud enough for her to catch the ſenſe of each phraſe. Hoyden! ruſtic! ſavage! repeated ſhe indignantly, as ſhe ſurveyed herſelf once more. The ſituation in which ſhe had been diſcovered then recurring to her, and the accidents which had diſcredited her toilet, all catching her eye, made her almoſt admit the juſtice of the remarks; and forgetting the inſolent affectation of ſuperiority which had dictated the utterance of them in her hearing, ſhe advanced to Lady Lucy, and apologizing for the diſhabille to which her morning's ramble had reduced her, offered, with returning good humour, to point out the improvements and alterations which had not yet been made apparent.

The overture was received with politeneſs, and accepted with acknowledgments by the amiable Lady Lucy and her elder brother: but Mr. Eſtcourt and another young man of faſhion choſe to amuſe a very bold-looking, deeply-rouged, middle-aged woman, of apparently high pretenſions, who was leaning familiarly upon an arm of each, by half-whiſpered witticiſms and obſervations upon their fair conductreſs, which

which obtained peals of laughter from all who walked within ſix paces of them.

Roſella, conſoled by the ſolicitous attention of Lady Lucy, endured this polite perſecution with tolerable fortitude, till hearing the name of Miſs Beauclerc mentioned in accents ſhe diſapproved, ſhe liſtened more attentively to the diſtinguiſhed *hoaxers* who were ſo obligingly honoring her with their deriſion, and hearing her beſt friend not very ceremoniouſly treated, ſhe turned to the party, and with ſome vivacity exclaimed—

"I am indeed ruſtic enough to imagine that ſuch converſation as I have this moment heard, would have been more proper on the other ſide of Miſs Beauclerc's gates: and beſides, Sir," added ſhe, addreſſing Mr. Eſtcourt, and gathering reſentment as ſhe ſpoke, "you would diſplay your judgment in returning to your firſt ſubject, for I am ſurely a much greater object of ridicule than Miſs Beauclerc, who is one of the beſt and moſt amiable of women."

The whole party pauſed at this unlooked-for warmth; the principal offender made no reply, and Roſella immediately repenting that ſhe had given way to the impulſe of the moment, had the additional mortification of obſerving that Lady Lucy appeared exceedingly chagrined at what had paſſed. Lord Morteyne too, who had no ſhare in the offence, ſeemed hurt, and Roſella would have given the moſt cheriſhed of her poſſeſſions to have recalled her words. She determined to endure any further impertinence the witty groupe choſe to inflict upon her, rather than increaſe the vexation, perhaps too the ſecret cenſure, of Lady Lucy, and reſumed the office ſhe had taken upon herſelf, with redoubled alacrity, reſolutely endeavouring to ſhut her ears againſt the

the titters, hints, and innuendos which ſtill eſcaped from the well-bred ſet, who choſe to regard her in the firſt place as a dependant, and ſecondly as a child, in compliment to a woman of high rank who was preſent, and with well-founded claims to admiration from perſonal beauty, was actually wavering whether ſhe ſhould or ſhould not forward a match in agitation for her favourite grand-daughter, by diſcloſing to her the ingredients of a pomade known only to herſelf, which poſſeſſed, ſhe was fully perſuaded, the moſt ſovereign efficacy in heightening the charms of a youthful complexion, and in preſerving a lovelineſs of a riper date. This never-fading flower, this American aloe, had laughed exceedingly at the pertneſs of the ſilly girl, who preſumed to comment upon the converſation of people of faſhion, and daſhed any riſing fame the unadorned beauty of Roſella might have attained by remarking with a careleſs air, that ſhe was juſt ſuch a pretty unformed thing as Lady Agatha's *femme de chamber*, and much reſembled her.

"Does Miſs Beauclerc," aſked Lord Morteyne, to divert the attention of Roſella, "remain much longer at Avelines?"

"All the winter, I believe, my Lord," replied ſhe.

"And do you ſtay here all the winter?" ſaid Lady Lucy, in a voice of kindneſs.

"Oh I hope ſo!" returned Roſella, "I hope I ſhall be with my good and kind friend."

Lady Lucy ſmiled, but without any trait of irony or diſdain, and her brother ſmiled with the ſame expreſſion.

They had now nearly reached a ſwing-gate that opened to the road, and Lady Lucy making towards

towards it, thanked her fair conductreſs with great ſweetneſs, and Lord Morteyne made his acknowledgment with an air of being really obliged. Roſella had ſo far recovered her uſual ſpirits and vivacity, as to receive unmoved the half nods, half courteſies of ſome of the party as they quitted the grounds, and the intended mortification of being wholly and diſdainfully overlooked by the reſt. More pleaſed with the notice of Lady Lucy, than chagrined by the impertinence of her aſſociates, ſhe ran to the houſe, and flying up ſtairs to the dreſſing-room of Miſs Beauclerc, haſtily informed her to whom ſhe had been doing the honors of Avelines.

Her friend ſurveyed her figure with ſurpriſe and conſternation, and Mrs. Ellinger, who was preſent, eagrly exclaimed—

" Good heavens, Roſella! by what accident could you poſſibly have become this object?"

Roſella had almoſt forgotten the ſtate ſhe was in, but thus reminded, ſhe recounted the miſadventures of the morning, and extended the narrative to the little *bruſquerie* with which ſhe had retorted the rudeneſs ſhe had experienced. The gentle Selina looked extremely diſconcerted at the hiſtory ſhe imparted, and ſome glances were interchanged between her and the myſterious widow, expreſſive of exceſſive vexation; for in fact it was rather uncouth that a beautiful and young heroine ſhould be ſurpriſed by a tender and diſconſolate lover, whilſt ſhe was wheeling a barrow of loom, in petticoats fringed with black mud, and a robe whoſe fractured drapery embraced the wanton pinions of every zephyr that fluttered by. Nor had they, in the courſe of their extenſive reading, met with one inſtance of an inſulted charmer ever noticing the moſt outrageous

outrageous obloquy or taunt that envy, pride, and malice could inflict, except by distilling from her dark and fringed eyes a shower of pearly drops upon her pale and pensive cheek.

Yet however shocked Miss Beauclerc might be at the indecorum of Rosella, she was too fond of her to suffer a harsh reprimand to escape her lips; and though Mrs. Ellinger might long to read her a lecture upon the drooping loves and patient graces, she was obliged by her example to confine herself to an entreaty that Rosella would in future pay proper attention to her exterior. She was then dismissed by the ladies to repair her toilet, and they entered into a long and very interesting conversation concerning the expediency of her continuing the character of a lively and thoughtless, but very captivating girl, or whether the more subduing, though beaten track of pensive dignity should be recommended and enforced? They had been some time debating whether Lord Morteyne would prove the boisterous, unprincipled, daring, disliked, yet persevering lover, who was destined to traduce her, torment her, carry her off, and marry her, in spite either of inclination, law, gospel, or the favored swain; or whether the sequel would prove him the favored swain himself, who would respect her, venerate her, trust her, confide in her, sigh for her, and die for her in contempt of the most intricate, threatening, mysterious, black, and unpropitious appearances. The account, given by Rosella of his conduct that morning, determined the point in his favor; he was to be the perfect and happy lover, and they now put in practice two or three expedients, to discover if he, or any of his family, possessed

any tumble-down caſtle either in the north of England, in Wales, Scotland or Ireland.

In a ſhort time Roſella was pronounced a good horſewoman: a very beautiful animal had been bought for her uſe, and Miſs Beauclerc having two or three times feaſted her eyes, and fed her hopes, with a view of this beloved girl in her equeſtrian character, and being convinced of the gentleneſs of her horſe, ſent her forth, attended only by a groom lad, really and literally in ſearch of adventures. Uncertain of her powers, and though delighted, a little apprehenſive at being thus left to her own guidance, Roſella, for the firſt day or two, confined her rides to the neighbouring common; and then gathering courage, ſhe extended them by degrees, till ſhe was tolerably well acquainted with the country for ten miles round. Every time ſhe returned home, and haſtily diſmounting, ran to embrace her indulgent friend, the accuſtomed queſtion of "Who did you ſee?" was generally anſwered by "Nobody I knew;" and the two matrons growing impatient, as they very reaſonably might, at this chaſm in adventures, it almoſt occurred to them that the figure of Roſella, and the figure of her horſe, though they were both admirable, muſt by this time be pretty well known, and by ceaſing to excite curioſity, ceaſe to excite any vivid admiration.

Mr. Ellinger, *en attendant*, began to think that his wife had given up quite enough of her time for the conſolation and comfort of her fanciful friend, and had written to require her return home, ſetting forth in forcible terms the inconveniencies of her abſence; amongſt which the more prominent were, the impudence and lazineſs of Molly, their cook, who ſpoiled the dinner

dinner regularly every day; the diſappearance of ſeveral of his ſhirts; the deplorable ſtate of his daughter, who walked about the houſe ſlip-ſhod, and had not a whole frock to her back; and, laſtly, the filthy condition of his manſion, where it was impoſſible to move without diſturbing a buſhel of duſt, and bruſhing down a dozen cobwebs at every ſtep.

Miſs Beauclerc found it too difficult however, to part with her confidante and adviſer; ſhirts, frocks, and ſhoes were procured at ready-made warehouſes at her expence, and ſent to Mr. Ellinger to qualify his impatience for the return of his refined Lady, who accompanied her dear Sophia to town, and aſſiſted her in chooſing a very handſome piece of plate, as a ſop to her growling Cerberus. The friends then ventured to his den, and preſenting their offering, received a ſullen permiſſion that Mrs. Ellinger might reviſit Avelines for another month: and this amiable miſtreſs of an amiable family, having corrected her deſerted daughter, lectured her ſon, and ſufficiently ſtormed at her ſervants, returned with a light heart to the reſidence of taſte, ſentiment, friendſhip, and Sophia.

Roſella, who had not been of the excurſion, becauſe ſhe did not wiſh it, ſaw her re-appear without pleaſure, and only endeavored to ſee it without pain; for ſhe could not reconcile her judgment to the affected manners of Mrs. Ellinger, or ſubdue ſomething like contempt and diſlike which her abſurd language and ridiculous deportment often created, and for which Roſella invariably condemned herſelf, becauſe ſhe believed her to be friendly, and to poſſeſs a good heart.

Miſs Beauclerc, delighted to have carried her point with Mr. Ellinger, continued to trace with her invaluable Selina, her ſummer tour, and project each day different adventures for Roſella in the courſe of it, who in compliance with their injunctions and her own inclinations, continued her daily rides; and ſtill the ſame queſtion, and the ſame anſwer, were duly repeated, till one auſpicious morning ſhe mounted her horſe in high ſpirits, and ſtill more animated by the fineneſs of the weather, which was unuſually favorable for the ſeaſon, ſhe extended her peregrination rather further than uſual, and was haſtening home, when the cry of hounds and the horn of the huntſman ſaluted the ear of the ſpirited animal on which ſhe was ſeated, who ſnuffed the air, and laying his ears cloſe to his head, ſet off without further notice, followed by the horſe on which the groom was mounted, and ſoon joined in the chace.

Roſella, ſtartled at her want of power to reſtrain him, and terrified by the deafening yelping of the dogs, and the confuſed cries and ſhouts of the almoſt frantic crew, amongſt whom chance had thrown her, trembled, and ſcarcely kept her ſeat, which was ſeveral times endangered by the flying leaps which her courſer choſe to take. At length he thought proper to ford a brook that immediately obſtructed his progreſs, and about a dozen more horſes and riders plunging in at the ſame time, Roſella was in a moment as wet as though ſhe had been drawn through the ſtream.

She was ſcarcely again landed on a fine paſture, when her agitation of ſpirits overcame her, her trembling hands refuſed to retain the bridle, and half fainting, ſhe fell to the earth, where

ſtunned

ſtunned by the concuſſion, ſhe lay inſenſible to the danger with which ſhe was ſurrounded from the impetuous animals who were behind her, and purſuing their courſe, ſucceſſively leaped over her while ſhe was ſtretched upon the ground. One of the gentlemen of the hunt, either more compaſſionate, or more obſervant than others, threw himſelf from his horſe at a conſiderable hazard, and ſcarcely waiting till the tumultuous croud had gone by, flew to aid the luckleſs being who appeared ſtill unconſcious of the accident that had befallen her. He ſaw that ſhe was "fair and young;" but her eyes were cloſed, her lips pale, and her features void of expreſſion, ſo that every perſon (Mrs. Ellinger excepted) might have well excuſed any deficiency of rapturous admiration at the brilliant charms of his inanimate charge, whom he nevertheleſs endeavored to reſtore to life with more humanity than ſucceſs.

Diſtreſſed at the failure of his efforts, the ſtranger looked round for an *aid-du-camp*, and very opportunely diſcovered one in the perſon of a labourer, who was carrying a truſs of hay from a ſtack at a ſmall diſtance, to a public-houſe by the road-ſide. With the aſſiſtance of this man, Roſella was conveyed to it; but before ſhe was lodged in the houſe, the ſtranger was accoſted by a perſon on horſeback, who enquired what had happened.

"Ah, my Lord, is it you?" returned he: "you have arrived very *á-propos* to aſſiſt me in a d—mned troubleſome charge I have been Quixote enough to undertake. This fallen Diana," continued he, as he purſued his way, "was diſmounted during our chace this morning,

ing, and I begin to fear she is more seriously hurt than I had imagined."

They had now gained the house, and the women belonging to it being called, Rosella was given to their care, and a surgeon sent for by Lord Morteyne; for it was even him the stranger addressed, and he dispatched his own servant upon the errand.

When Rosella had been placed upon the best bed the *hotellerie* afforded, the gentlemen walked before the door of the house, impatient for the arrival of the medical person who would relieve them, they hoped, from an anxiety the most indifferent man must have experienced in the same situation.

"So this is the fair Syren whom Ainslie raves about," said the stranger, continuing a conversation which had begun in the house: "but who the devil is she?"

"An orphan, I am told," replied the other: "she is allied to the family of old Beauclerc who is lately dead—the people, I mean, who live at Avelines."

"Oh, aye—the melancholy old maid Lady Lucy was speaking of."

"Yes; this poor girl seems left to her management, and is suffered to ride about the country with no other protection than the attendance of a lad."

"She appears to be a charming creature."

"She is one of the loveliest young women I ever beheld: but like other wild flowers, might be vastly improved by cultivation, I believe."

"I do not think so," cried the gentleman of the chace; "I should prefer her fresh from her native woodlands wild."

"Then

" Then ſhe would at this moment exactly meet your taſte ; for no Arabian untamed filly ever ſcorned the whip and ſpur, as ſhe ſcorns the forms of decorum and etiquette uſually practiſed by girls of her age and ſituation in life."

Lord Morteyne then proceeded to relate her appearance when ſhe was ſurpriſed by his ſiſter and her viſiters in the grounds at Avelines: " And yet," added he, " ſhe checked the criticiſms of Cyril with ſuch ſpirit, and after the little ebullition of reſentment, endured the ill-natured ſarcaſms of ſome, and the inceſſant tittering of others, with ſuch invincible patience and unaffected good-humour, that Lucy has become her firm champion, and will not ſuffer her to be cenſured or ridiculed in her preſence."

The ſtranger laughed at the recital, and commended the urbanity of Lady Lucy, who was, he ſaid, a good creature, and unfit to live in this world of ſelfiſhneſs and uncharitableneſs.

Long before the ſurgeon could arrive, Roſella recovered her recollection, and hearing ing from the woman who attended her, what had been done by the gentlemen for her benefit, earneſtly declared that ſhe was not at all hurt, and inſiſted upon riſing from her bed. The good people, who were not willing to give up ſo ſuddenly what they thought would turn out a profitable job, ran to inform Lord Morteyne and his companion, that the lady would have it ſhe was very well, and that ſhe would get up.

" Oh, if that be the caſe," cried the ſtranger, haſtily, " I ſhall place her in your protection, my Lord, leave my congratulations for her ſafety, and be off: for faith, I left my famous new mare to her own diſcretion, and I

begin-

begin to be uneasy lest Miss Jenny should have taken as little care of herself as your sister's handsome favorite."

He then flew away without waiting the reply of Lord Morteyne, and the women asked what was to be done. Rosella, however, spared them any further deliberation on the subject by making her appearance; and she no sooner beheld whom they were addressing, than uttering an exclamation of surprise—

"Ah, my Lord!" cried she, "how much I am indebted to your charitable assistance! But Miss Beauclerc must express my acknowledgments. Will your Lordship add to the obligation by informing me how I can return home, for I am very anxious that she should not be alarmed at my long absence?"

After a short conversation, he dismissed the idea which the women had excited, by insinuating that Rosella was light-headed; and finding her rational, and apparently unhurt, he sent to the nearest inn for a postchaise. But the surgeon arriving in the interim, Rosella was obliged to suffer him to examine her pulse, and with much entreaty on her part, the ceremony of losing blood, which he pronounced to be proper, was deferred till she returned to Avelines.

Lord Morteyne felt himself interested that so young and amiable a creature should not lose her life by neglecting this precaution, and determined to accompany her home, that he might enforce the opinion of the surgeon, which appeared reasonable. He contrived to see him without the knowledge of Rosella, who was too eager for the arrival of the chaise, to remember that it was necessary to do so; and at length,

length, to the great relief of her impatience, the meſſenger who had been diſpatched, returned ſucceſsful. Before ſhe ſtepped into it, ſhe recollected that the people of the houſe ought to be rewarded for their attention, and left her purſe with them—a liberality Lord Morteyne did not oppoſe. She then took her leave of him with a ſimple, yet earneſt expreſſion of gratitude, which however he diſclaimed any title to, and the chaiſe drove off; but it was ſtopped again in two minutes by his Lordſhip, who meant to have followed her on horſeback, until he diſcovered that the knight-errant of Roſella had borrowed his ſteed, that he might purſue Miſs Jenny with greater celerity.

Lord Morteyne entreated that Miſs Montreſor would allow him a ſeat in the chaiſe, which was very readily complied with, and he had now leiſure to remove the error ſhe had been in, in imagining he had rendered her the ſervice of conveying her to the place where ſhe had received aſſiſtance: though he could not perſuade her that ſhe did not owe him obligation for his generous attentions.

He felt the intereſt he had already taken in her welfare encreaſed by the artleſs energy of her gratitude, and was irreſiſtibly prompted to hint, diſtantly indeed, and with great delicacy, at the impropriety of a lady ſo young and ſo engaging as Miſs Montreſor, venturing ſo far from home without a chaperon or companion.

Roſella comprehended the full force of the rebuke, gentle though it was, and was thunderſtruck at the facility with which ſhe had been ſuffered to err.

"Is it poſſible," thought ſhe, "that Miſs Beauclerc ſhould not have been aware of this?"

Lord Morteyne saw her consternation, and was hurt to have occasioned her so much mortification as it was evident she felt: it was impossible however to enlarge on the subject without increasing her emotion, and he conversed upon indifferent and unimportant themes, till the chaise stopped at Avelines: but Rosella could not detach her mind from the slight and half-expressed censure he had betrayed, which rendered her silent and thoughtful, until he forced her attention by enquiring if she would not wish the driver to take her to the back entrance, that Miss Beauclerc might not be alarmed by seeing her return in a carriage, before she was assured that no material accident had happened.

Rosella thanked him for the caution, and assented.

"You will pardon me," continued Lord Morteyne, "if I desire a servant to inform Miss Beauclerc that it has been strongly recommended you should have a vein opened as soon as possible; for I should imagine I had very imperfectly performed the office my friend Oberne delegated to me, if I neglected to give her this intelligence."

She again thanked him, and asked if he would not do her the honor to accompany her into the house: but he declined the invitation.

Lord Morteyne's servant now opened the chaise-door, and old Simpson, who happened to be walking across the stable-yard, hastened to it in great surprise. To quiet the apprehensions of the old man, Rosella briefly mentioned her disaster, and Lord Morteyne having twice repeated the injunction of the surgeon, desired him particularly not to fail communicating it to his

his Lady, and making his bow to Roſella, ordered the poſt-boy to drive on.

After two or three moments of reflection, ſhe turned in ſilence from the minute enquiries of Simpſon, and ran up ſtairs to the dreſſing-room of her friend, where ſhe was ſure to be found till dinner time in cloſe conference with Mrs. Ellinger, ſurrounded by maps, tours, and roads, from the folio Atlas to the pocket volume.

CHAP. X.

Rage for education—a well-conducted fête.

"YOU have been an unuſual long ride, my love," ſaid Miſs Beauclerc, as Roſella entered the room; "we have been uneaſy that you did not return ſooner."

Mrs. Ellinger confirmed the aſſertion as far as it related to her, by rehearſing the cruel anxiety ſhe had ſuffered; and Roſella, after a little preface, related as much of the miſadventure that had befallen her, as ſhe herſelf knew.

Miſs Beauclerc trembled at the peril ſhe had been in; but the ladies interchanged very ſignificant regards when the much admired hero appeared on the canvaſs; and they conſidered his denial of being the fortunate man who had reſcued the fair one from danger, as an ingenious device to ſpare her tender heart the weight of ſuch a load of gratitude.

But

But in giving the narrative, Rosella could no prevail upon herself to repeat the hint Lord Morteyne had let fall, of the impropriety she had so innocently been guilty of; because it appeared to reflect either upon the judgment or the prudence of Miss Beauclerc.

Mr. Ellinger's unnumbered questions were now interrupted by Simpson, who having rehearsed the adventures of the post-chaise in the housekeeper's room, recollected the injunctions of the young Lord, and entered the apartment to fulfil them. Miss Beauclerc instantly caught the alarm; and fancying her beloved child had received some dangerous contusion, notwithstanding her earnest assertions to the contrary, sent instantly to the family apothecary, and to the London physician, and insisted that she should immediately be put to bed.

The absent groom and his horses, who had not yet been heard of, were wholly forgotten in the hurry that ensued, and every pleasurable sensation which the intervention of Lord Morteyne had excited in the bosom of Miss Beauclerc, vanished in terror for the event, which might deprive her of all that could, in her eyes, render life desirable. Rosella, who really felt stiff and indisposed, submitted at length to the discipline and confinement preparing for her; and the next day, in spite of every precaution, she was discovered to have a violent cold, sore throat, and considerable fever. The last fatal illness of her father recurred to the recollection of Miss Beauclerc, who tormented herself by imagining that the disorder of his daughter was of the same nature, and would terminate as horribly. In vain did Mrs. Ellinger exhaust her invention in prognosticating future adventures and

future

future greatneſs; ſhe was not to be diverted from her fears but by ſome very intereſting intelligence the conſoling Selina accidentally procured: this was no other, than that Lord Morteyne was actually at that moment confined to his bed by the ſame malady that had ſeized their dear ſuffering Roſella.

"What wonderful ſympathy!" exclaimed Mrs. Ellinger, continuing her harangue, "what a ſtriking and myſterious ſimilarity of deſtiny approaches theſe amiable, charming, and well-matched young people to each other! Is it not improbable, my dear friend, that fate ſhould, after a ſeries of incidents ſo remarkable, fail to render them happy in each other? But certainly we muſt prepare for many unfortunate and intricate adventures to delay their tender union, which truſt me, Sophia, we ſhall live to congratulate each other upon."

Miſs Beauclerc viewed this ſublime effuſion in a prophetic light, and ſuffered hope and gladneſs once more to viſit her heart; little ſuſpecting that this wonderful and myſterious ſympathy in the deſtinies of Lord Morteyne and Roſella, was occaſioned by the intolerable dampneſs of the hack poſt-chaiſe, which having been out the day before for ſeveral hours in a heavy rain, had been incapable of reſiſting the gravity of the torrent that penetrated into every part of it, and aſſiſted the ſhower-bath Roſella had received in the chace, to diſorder her, and had been the only cauſe of the indiſpoſition of his Lordſhip, who had been dancing the whole of the preceding night, and having taken his hat off, that he might recline with greater eaſe, had rode twelve miles in this dangerous machine, in a very ſound ſleep.

The

The winter was considerably advanced before Rosella had wholly recovered the effect of this adventure, and her resolution never more to venture upon the back of her run-away steed, was not thought very strange or mysterious even by Mrs. Ellinger. The animal had been recovered by the groom, who returned home in safety, and the important incident was settled when Rosella grew convalescent, by a very strenuous letter of thanks from Miss Beauclerc to Lord Morteyne and his *unknown* friend. This *politesse* had been retorted by a note of enquiry concerning the fair invalid, which produced a second on the part of Miss Beauclerc, trusting, hoping, and wishing that his Lordship himself was recovering, or would soon recover: and there the intercourse ended, to the extreme astonishment and mortification of Mrs. Ellinger, who thought the man was either crazy, or had entangled himself in some unfortunate engagement, which now tortured his mind, and rived his heart: on this score alone she could forgive and pity him.

Avelines had now almost lost its attractions with the departure of the foliage and warm weather. Lord Morteyne had deserted the neighbourhood, and Mrs. Ellinger could no longer be suffered to neglect her household; so that Miss Beauclerc, leaving her improvements to the proper superintendent, established herself at her house in town. Her chariot was then sent three or four times a week for the indulgent Selina, who quitted every thing to assist in perfecting the charming plan, which, amidst innumerable consultations, had been sketched out at Avelines: and in return for this proof of uncommon attachment, Miss Beauclerc could

could not avoid ſending Roſella ſometimes to Chancery-Lane. As for herſelf, ſhe had originally diſliked the manners and perſon of Mr. Ellinger, and by an extreme indulgence of what ſhe called natural antipathy, had now an unconquerable averſion to him, in which the gentle Selina aſſuring her of her entire ſympathy, Miſs Beauclerc never troubled herſelf to ruffle her delicate ſoul by enduring his ſociety if ſhe could avoid it, and Roſella almoſt always made her viſits unaccompanied by her friend. Thoſe which ſhe more aſſiduouſly paid Mr. Mordaunt, whom ſhe very ſincerely loved and reverenced, were ſcarcely leſs irkſome to her, from the minute, teazing, and fretful diſpoſition of his ſiſter, who inſiſted with great perſeverance, that Roſella was moſt pitiably brought up, for that ſhe had no reaſon in her arguments, and no method in her actions.

"What is it that you diſapprove in her?" aſked Mr. Mordaunt, rather angrily: "in my opinion ſhe is a very good girl, and a very clever girl; but if you mean to lament that her genius was not put in a go-cart till it could never creep without one, I muſt aſſert, my dear ſiſter, that I think ſhe is benefited by the neglect. I am no friend to the fine ſyſtem of trying and condemning without mercy the little indiſcretions and natural ebullitions of youth. I cannot endure to the ſee the mind of a young woman ſuſpended in the chains of grey-headed prudence and circumſpection, till like a gibetted criminal, there is nothing left to indicate what the original figure was, but the tattered, diſguſting ſkeleton which the hangman's accoutrements hold together."

Mrs.

Mrs. Methwald was much offended by this ſpeech, which ſhe thought an attack upon a ſubject, of all others ſhe could leaſt bear to have rudely handled. This lady having lately loſt her huſband, had taken up her reſidence with her brother, that ſhe might ſave the principal part of her income for the uſe of a daughter, who had ſome years before married an expenſive man of ſome faſhion, chiefly it was ſuppoſed, for the pleaſure of ſeducing him from a matronly beauty, whoſe moſt devoted cicisbeo Mr. Creſſy was; and to render the eclat of the defection complete, the deſerted dame was called the moſt intimate friend of Mrs. and Miſs Methwald. Mrs. Creſſy was idolized by her father; and againſt his judgment, he at length aſſented to the match. The bride was furniſhed with jewels, and preſented; but unluckily her fortune, which had been called immenſe, proved to be conſiderably leſs than Mr. Creſſy had computed it at, and in reſentment for ſuch perfidy, he reſolved to run through it as faſt as poſſible, that the old man might ſee he was not to be fettered and ſtinted with impunity.

The education of the young lady, his wife, had been conducted entirely under the eye of Mrs. Methwald, who had indefatigably collected every publication upon the "delightful taſk" of rearing "the tender thought;" which had ever appeared; from the grand, minute, ſuperb, ſentimental, overbearing, manœuvring lady of doubtful fame, Madame G—l—s, to the pretty, natural, eaſy, and inſtructive moral of Mrs. Trimmer. But all this could not ſuffice—Mrs. Methwald had determined to form a phœnix, and had alike devoured eſſays, ſermons, poſthumous

posthumous advice, and posthumous letters. The *fortiter in re*, and *suaviter in modo*, struck her imagination as a maxim wonderfully sublime and beautiful, and became the groundwork of the superstructure she wished to raise. Unluckily however, the object of her cares and hopes was a being of uncommon mould, alike without affections and without passions. The *fortiter in re* with her consisted in self-gratification, without regard to the feelings and the mortifications of others; and when she most displayed a cold-blooded supercilliousness, void of those little attentions and endearments which form the charm of domestic society, the unfortunate beings who were destined to be her companions, were most certain of beholding her broad white countenance puckered into simpers —this was the *suaviter in modo*. She was like a stinted cucumber from an early hot-bed, which of its own nature retains only the coldness, and tastes only of the manure that reared it: her person corresponded with her mind, and her complexion was so uniformly death-like and inanimate, that her husband in reforming her toilet, insisted upon introducing the rouge-box.

This lady Rosella met at the house of Mr. Mordaunt, who in compliment to his sister, treated his wonderful niece with attention and politeness; yet on many occasions she had much offended and disgusted him, and did not efface any unpleasant impression he might have received when he presented to her his little friend, Miss Montresor: Mrs. Creffy imagined that her uncle intended to request of her to introduce Rosella into her circle of acquaintance; and to crush such an expectation she received the introductory

troductory courtesy of Mr. Mordaunt's insignificant *protegée* with a stiff inclination of the head, gazed at her attentively for half a minute, threw her eyes on the ground, closed them with a quick motion, and drawing her mouth into a half-prim, half-insidious simper, abruptly turned to her mother, to enquire if the Demainbrys had lately called in upon her.

Mama, who discerned nothing in this but an agreeable air of fashion, began a very minute answer to the question; and Mr. Mordaunt, who saw every thing in it which he did not wish to see, would not urge Rosella on to the notice of others, but contented himself with marking the most benevolent attentions to his young favorite during the remainder of her visit—a circumstance that provoked the indignation of both the ladies.

The day after this pleasant introduction, Rosella was to pass with Mrs. Ellinger by previous appointment, to commemorate the birth of her daughter Livia, who was now so seldom in the society of her former companion, that the rivalry and constitutional animosity by which Rosella had two or three years since so much suffered, was now confined to the coarse mockery with which she spoke of her to a few favorite intimates, and to Betty the house-maid, who was her principal confidante.

The evening of this auspicious day was to be enlivened with a ball, to which the reluctant consent of Mr. Ellinger had been almost forcibly obtained: he insisted however, that he would quit the house until it should be again sobered, that his brains might not be addled by the folly and uproar to which his family consigned

ſigned themſelves: and Mrs. Ellinger, as it may be imagined, readily aſſented to the preliminary.

Roſella very unwillingly quitted the houſe of Miſs Beauclerc at two o'clock, becauſe it had been ſtipulated that ſhe ſhould go early. The carriage ſet her down in Chancery-Lane, and was to be in waiting for her between twelve and one, when Mr. Ellinger brutally inſiſted that the feſtival ſhould end. About two hours after her entrance, the dinner was announced, and it was diſcovered that Mr. Povey, who took his meals in the houſe, was abſent. Miſs Livia declared it was very hard he ſhould ſtay out ſo on her birth-day; and obſerving that no one elſe appeared much chagrined at the circumſtance, ſhe was offended, and reſolved to be very ſulky till he returned. In vain did Roſella, by every little attention in her power, endeavor to divert her ill-humour, which completely annulled the purpoſe of the *feté*—no Povey, no ſmiles! Mrs. Ellinger was mortified at this public exhibition of the perverſeneſs of her daughter, and her vexation was conſiderably increaſed by the unhappy plight of the dinner, which was meant to be ſuperb, and was found not to be eatable. How unfortunate! Did any one ever hear of a ſpoiled dinner at a heroine's entertainment? No!—even though the heaven-dropped food of an *elegant diſtreſſed* ſhould be cooked by an infirm old nurſe, or an ignorant cottage damſel at the foot of a ſequeſtered mountain, the meal is invariably exquiſitely neat and delicious, and the table always flows with milk and honey.

Fate unpropitious to the ſerenity of Miſs Livia, had deſtined that Mr. Povey ſhould on that

that morning, whilſt in the act of conveying ſome papers of importance to a lawyer who unfortunately lived within the atmoſphere of Bond-Street, meet Mr. Eſtcourt and a knot of loungers, with moſt of whom he had been on terms of intimacy at Weſtminſter; and the conſequence was, a general reſolution to *hoax* the quill-driver, who was ſurrounded in a moment, and ſo much occupied in ſhaking hands with three or four *ci-devant* friends all at the ſame moment, that the green bag fell to the ground, and was inſtantly kicked into a kennel, whilſt ſeveral open fiſts flapped his ſhoulders with energetic zeal, and the epithets of my good one, my fine fellow, &c. climaxed the ſalutation.

After a few lurking ſcruples, which he did not dare avow, Povey, overcome by the unuſual and flattering condeſcenſion of Mr. Eſtcourt and his companions, conſented to dine with them at an hotel; but recollecting the conſequence of the commiſſion with which he had been entruſted, he had juſt enough ſtrength of mind to endure the raillery of the party, whilſt he raiſed from the pavement the badge of his deteſted occupation, and carried the papers to the appointed place, accompanied by all his new aſſociates, who would not quit him. Povey, having thus relieved his mind from any anxiety that might have clogged his gaiety, inſtantly aſſumed the vacant, lolloping, ſtriding, unſteady gait of his companions, leant on the arm of Mr. Eſtcourt, contrived to occupy the whole pavement, and elated with his unexpected good-fortune in being ſo delightfully noticed in ſpite of his degradation, compelled all the

the women he met to make a circuit into the carriage-way, and inſtantly laughed aloud at ſome opportune ſally of wit.

It was therefore little to be wondered at, that at nine in the evening Miſs Livia was ſtill in the ſullens; for Mr. Povey, who had ſo unaccountably abſented himſelf, had engaged her for the dance, and nobody could prevail upon her to forget the neglect, and take another partner.

Roſella felt diſpirited and fatigued from the effect of her continued ill-humour, teazed by the riotous familiarity of young Ellinger, who was ſwallowing all the wine he could ſeize from the ſervants, and tormented by the folly of his mother, who had labored very hard to produce ſentimental ſituations and intereſting ſcenes from converſations and manners very oppoſite to general ideas of refinement.

The *ennui* which now overpowered Roſella, notwithſtanding her painful efforts to ſeem lively and amuſed, by giving her an air of conſtraint and gravity that ſat awkwardly on her features, ſubjected her to the cenſures of the aſſembly for being proud and faſtidious; whilſt the ſuperiority of her appearance, and the attractions of her figure, excited the univerſal indignation of all the females who were preſent, and ſhe became the object of perpetual whiſpers, tittering, and offenſive glances, which Mrs. Ellinger could not obſerve, becauſe ſhe was now extremely buſy in urging forward the tardy refreſhments, already much diminiſhed by the inceſſant pilferings of Maſter William and his ſiſter, who, angry though ſhe was, ſtill condeſcended to take rather more than her ſhare of the good things provided for her gueſts.

The

The ſervants, teazed and goaded on either ſide, watched the dexterous movements of the young gentleman; and Mrs. Betty, the ſuperintendent of the ſtores, catching him in the act of conveying away a baſket of cakes, thumped him without ſcruple or mercy. Miſs Livia, who had likewiſe ſtolen into the back-room for ſome nefarious purpoſe, applauded the puniſhment.

"That's right," exclaimed ſhe; "he deſerves to be well beat for his greedineſs!"

"Hold you *your* tongue," retorted Betty, "you are as bad as he every bit: I'm ſure there isn't ſuch another two among the whole company, big and little."

"How croſs you are!" replied the young lady; "hav'nt I done all I can to help you?"

"Help me, quotha! let it alone and welcome," cried the ſerving dame, raiſing her voice; "you've helped off ever ſo many tumblers of orgitt, and I ſeed you carry away myſelf, a whole bottle of caterpillar."

"What a ſtory!" exclaimed Miſs, in a tone equally exalted: "but I don't care—I'll make William remember ſtealing the cakes however!"

Unfortunately, William happened to grin at this threat; and he immediately received a glaſs of wine in his face from the hands of his virago ſiſter, and ſtruggling for breath, he roared out that his new waiſtcoat was ſpoiled: the little remnant of patience which Mrs. Betty and her coadjutors had, by the favor of heaven, till then preſerved, entirely vaniſhed, and a moſt horrible uproar enſued, that ſoon awakened the attention of Mrs. Ellinger and her gueſts. She flew to learn the cauſe of ſo indecent an interruption of the amuſements of the evening,

evening, and in her abſence from the ball-room, ſome of the dancers, under pretence of wanting ſpace and freſh air, which indeed might very well have been the fact, opened the door, and liſtened to the contending parties.

Roſella was ſhocked at the improper language ſhe heard, and bluſhed both for the violent mother, and her delinquent children. She endeavoured to draw the attention of the liſteners from ſo diſgraceful a ſcene, but in vain: they enjoyed it too much to give up the delights of it without abſolute neceſſity, and were ſoon further regaled by another, and ſtill more outrageous riot of a different kind, from below ſtairs. It ſeemed to approach by degrees, and Roſella eagerly liſtening, more from inquietude and terror than from curioſity, diſtinguiſhed ſcraps of Bacchanalian ſongs, roared out of tune and out of time; vollies of oaths half uttered, and convulſive peals of loud laughter, whilſt every other minute was ſignalized by a moſt uncommon lumbering noiſe, accompanied by ſhouts of exultation, outcries, and curſes.

A pair of wretched violins, and an accompanying tabor and pipe entirely worthy of them, which made up the orcheſtra for the dancers, were huſhed by the ſtill more diſcordant noiſes that overpowered all their efforts; and the whole aſſembly awaited in impatient trepidation, the unfolding of this *myſterious* buſineſs.

At length it was *elucidated* by the entrance of Mr. Povey, much intoxicated, ſupported by two young men in a ſituation very little better than his own, and followed by ſeveral others, who made a variety of ingenious efforts as they advanced, to preſerve the centre of gravity. The head

hend of Mr. Povey was decorated with a counſellor's wig, put on in ſo cavalier a ſtyle, that one of his eyes and half his face were concealed under it, and his perſon was decorated with a pleader's gown, not ſo well adjuſted as it might have been.

" Damme, hold up!" exclaimed one of his gentlemen uſhers; " ſtand ſteady, my neat one!"

" Open the cauſe, confound you," cried another; " don't be brow-beat, my fine fellow."

" Zounds, man," bawled a third, " he has not got his brief."

Then ſnatching ſome lemonade from a ſalver, he poured it very deliberately upon the wig of the mock barriſter, which diſtilled it on to his face, and cloſed up his diſengaged eye.

" I'm blind!" ſtammered Povey, reeling violently, " blind—as juſtice—ſo ſeat me—on the bench."

" Aye aye," vociferated three or four voices, " ſeat him on the bench."

One of the party looking round, obſerved that there was a very full court; then ſeizing Roſella by the arm, who had been driven near him by the curioſity of thoſe behind her—

" Are you plaintiff or defendant?" continued he. She ſtruggled to eſcape from him, and as he could not ſtand with any firmneſs, ſhe ſoon ſucceeded.

Mrs. Ellinger now advanced with an air of infinite dignity; and irritated as ſhe had been by the ſcene ſhe had juſt left, it was not very probable that ſhe ſhould tolerate the contemptuous inſolence of the intruders—

" Mr. Povey," ſaid ſhe. indignantly, " your conduct of to-day is inſufferable—I deſire that you

you will quit the room, and that your impertinent companions inſtantly leave the houſe. How dare you, Sir, intrude theſe vulgar fellows amongſt my friends!"

"Vulgar fellows!" repeated Povey, who appeared to awake as from a dream; then wiping the humidity from his face, he gazed with blinking eyes at his obliging attendants. "Ma'am," added he, "you—you—miſtake, Ma'am: this is Sir Belmeis Aſhmore—no—there he ſtands—I believe—and that honeſt fellow is Leſley—and here is my friend Eſtcourt—and that is—faith I can't ſee exactly—but he is—ſomebody."

The miſſes ſimpered, and the young gentlemen, comprehenſively included in Mrs. Ellinger's friends, thought Povey a fortunate dog, and envied him ſuch daſhing aſſociates; whilſt the gentle and prudent lady of the manſion pauſed a moment to conſider in what manner ſhe ſhould ſuffer this adventure to terminate. Povey had named a young man of faſhion, a Baronet, and the brother of a Nobleman, intelligence that entirely changed the face of affairs; and ſhe was now very well diſpoſed to think the frolic that introduced them under his roof, a very harmleſs and agreeable one. All the ladies of the party appeared equally willing to tolerate it, and at length Povey was huſtled to his own apartment, and Miſs Livia recalled from a haſty baniſhment, to which her miſconduct had doomed her, that her fair hand might be beſtowed by her decorous mama upon the Baronet, who was ſo far however from being *en train* to dance, that he was ſcarcely able to walk.

Roſella, diſguſted, frightened, and reluctant, was compelled to ſtand up with Mr. Leſley, who was not in a ſituation to underſtand that ſhe choſe to decline the honor he was ſolicitous to confer upon her. The reſt of this diſordered groupe very prudently preferred being ſpectators of the dance, and Mrs. Ellinger, affecting to preſerve great dignity, yet inwardly exulting, gave the word of command to the magnificent orcheſtra.

The partner of Roſella contrived, with a little aſſiſtance, to walk the figure without much deranging his neighbours; but inebriated as he was, his ear was grievouſly hurt by the horrible diſcord that aſſailed it—

"May I be black-balled eternally," cried he, "if I ever dance again to a hurdy-gurdy!"

"There's a conceit!" exclaimed Mr. Eſtcourt, who happened to hear him; "the devil a hurdy-gurdy is there but in your brain: I tell you it's a jew's-harp and a kettle-drum."

This amendment created an almoſt univerſal laugh, in which however neither Mrs. Ellinger nor Roſella could join; for the good lady was offended in behalf of her muſicians, and Mr. Leſley's fair partner felt humiliated and diſpleaſed. Fortune indeed had hitherto favored her ſo far, that ſhe had not been much incommoded by the attention of either gentleman; but unluckily Miſs Livia, who had now recovered the utmoſt extent of her good-humour, and was giggling and chattering without reſtraint, exclaimed to one of her companions—

"Only look at Miſs Montreſor, how glum ſhe is!"

"Miſs

"Miſs Montreſor!" repeated Mr. Eſtcourt, gazing round him; "where is that charming little Iroquois?"

"Lord, there ſhe is to be ſure," returned Miſs Livia; "that fine lady in the pouts, who thinks none of us are good enough to wipe her ſhoes."

"Ho, does ſhe ſo?" ſaid the gentleman: "when I ſaw her laſt, by G—d I believe no one would have been ſolicitous for that honor. Leſley," continued he, affecting to whiſper, "don't you remember that fine girl digging potatoes at Hampton-wick, with flowing locks and rent garments?"

"Looſe were her treſſes ſeen, her zone unbound!" exclaimed Mr. Leſley, in an heroic accent; and ſtaggering to Roſella, who had run to Mrs. Ellinger, to beg that ſhe might be permitted to ſit down, he ſeized her hand, ſwearing that ſhe was a divine creature, and deſerved a civic crown for her atchievements.

Again ſhe appealed to Mrs. Ellinger, who having now no hope of deriving any thing intereſting from ſuch horrid brutes, who appeared in more danger of falling aſleep than of falling in love, and fearing to be cenſured for tolerating ſuch unqualified impertinence, ſhe again aſſumed her moſt ſublime mien, and with infinite ſolemnity expoſtulated upon ſuch ungentlemanly conduct. But as ſoon as they diſcovered that ſhe was the Lady of the manſion, her remonſtrances, inſtead of ſubduing, increaſed their inſolence, by the proſpect of hoaxing Mrs. Latitat, and quizzing the handſome potatoe-digger at the ſame time.

The whole party ſeconded this noble purpoſe by encoring the witticiſms, roaring out bravo

at every capital hit, and finally, when the enemy were totally discomfited, the men retreating and the women fainting, this frantic crew, some of whom were British Legislators, began hallooing most vehemently to signify their victory, and celebrate their triumph.

At this moment Mr. Ellinger entered the room, fury and revenge lowering on his brow, and several constables in his train. The conduct of Mr. Povey and his companions had attracted the notice of a very grave and indefatigable personage who superintended in the office, who in defiance of the noise and confusion around him, had, till within the last hour, been writing his six words in a line, and his six lines in a page, with wonderful perseverance and unabated attention: but though he would have been an excellent secretary to the mad hero of the north, it was not in human nature to hear unmoved, the abominable jar of horrible sounds that began to assail his sturdy ears when the truant was conducted home: the scribe was enraged to find, for the first time, his quill curvetting, and his eye wandering from the parchment to bring intelligence to his distracted brain; and perceiving that it was wholly impossible again to fix his roving attention, he snatched his hat, and flew with all the energy of revenge, to several places where he thought it probable he should meet Mr. Ellinger. Having at length succeeded in his search, he made out such a change against *Povey and others aiding and abetting*, that Mr. Ellinger collected his judicial attendants, and stumped home, firmly resolved to lodge all the conspirators in the watch-house.

His wife, shocked at so vulgar and plebeian an idea, which he announced on entering the room,

room, and inexpreſſibly mortified at the events of the evening, that for a month paſt ſhe had been planning to render uncommon and delightful, endeavored to palliate what had happened: but Mr. Ellinger imitated thoſe barbarous huſbands who cruelly maltreat a gentle, lovely, and faultleſs wife, by deſiring her to check her confounded tongue, and then proceeded to execute his intention, notwithſtanding the endeavors of the intruders to reſiſt with effect.

"Good God!" whiſpered the diſconſolate matron, "I ſhall be derided by all my friends! What a cataſtrophe! How will it ſound that the principal men amongſt my viſiters, inſtead of entangling themſelves in imprudent yet indelible paſſions for beautiful girls of myſterious birth, ſhould make a drunken riot in ſpite of the awe which my preſence ought to have inſpired, and be ignominiouſly taken to a vulgar watch-houſe, when they ought to have been employed in carrying off their lovely unknowns to their ſequeſtered caſtles:"

In deſpite of the mortifying cruelty of the circumſtance, the good friends of Mr. Povey were at length led away, after the deſtruction of a few glaſſes and trumblers, and ſome hyſteric fits on the part of a few ladies, who declared however, on recovering their breath and recollection, that they ſhould now dance with more ſpirit than before, and maliciouſly begged Mrs. Ellinger to try to prevail with her huſband to join the party; a requeſt ſhe was imprudent enough to comply with, and the reſult was a very rough refuſal, the inſtant diſmiſſion of the ſuperb orcheſtra, and a very plain hint to thoſe who had conveyances in waiting, that the moſt proper thing they could do, would be to depart.

Mrs. Ellinger, ſtill more ſhocked, had now nothing to do but to weep over her unhappy deſtiny: but her gueſts in general regarded her tears with the moſt vulgar apathy; and after a moſt cheerleſs and tedious interval, the rooms were cleared of all but the family and Roſella, who waited with painful impatience to hear the chariot announced. But unfortunately, Miſs Beauclerc knowing her fondneſs for dancing, and imagining ſhe would be pleaſed with her *ſoirée*, delayed ſending it rather beyond the time propoſed, and Roſella was obliged to witneſs a violent quarrel between Mrs. Ellinger and her huſband, and a furious recrimination on the part of their hopeful and amiable children.

Time however ſtill moves, though ſlowly, and at half after one, ſhe left the wretched habitation of moroſe tyranny, imprudent folly, abſurd pretenſions, and flippant bickering. Miſs Beauclerc, who ſat up for her return, was ſurpriſed to ſee her ſo lifeleſs and diſpirited, when ſhe had expected to behold her all gaiety and animation: but an explanation of the diſaſters of the evening well accounted for the cauſe, and her friend not only ſympathized in her diſappointment and vexations, but equally in her poor Selina's well imagined mortification and chagrin.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Rage for accompliſhments—Soft manners in a lady of faſhion critically illuſtrated.

TWO mornings after the fête, Mr. Mordaunt was announced to Miſs Beauclerc before ſhe had quitted her breakfaſt table, and as he did not often confer the favor of a ceremonious viſit, ſhe concluded that he had ſome communication to make relating to affairs of buſineſs. He addreſſed her with greater ſolemnity and leſs kindneſs than uſual, and after a converſation of a few minutes—

"So I find that this little girl," ſaid he, turning to Roſella, "narrowly eſcaped being conducted to the watch-houſe on Thurſday night, for being ſuſpiciouſly found in the company of half a dozen houſe-breakers."

Roſella ſmiled, and he continued—

"I heard this pretty anecdote from Lord Morteyne, whoſe fooliſh brother was one of the gang it ſeems. Lady Lucy Eſtcourt was uneaſy for the reſult of the precious frolic, and I was applied to, to propoſe terms of accommodation to Ellinger. In the diſcuſſion of the buſineſs, I learned that Miſs Montreſor had grounds for complaint, and I am commiſſioned to offer very humble excuſes, which I ſuppoſe will be accepted. And now that I have explained myſelf," continued he, with a countenance half-ſerious, half-gay, "let me never more hear that your fondneſs for dancing, or any other youthful folly, betrays you into a ſituation

ſituation ſo diſtreſſing and extremely improper, as the account I have received gives me to underſtand you were expoſed to on Thurſday."

Miſs Beauclerc colored, and was beginning a vindication, but Mr. Mordaunt interrupted it by diſmiſſing Roſella with good-humoured freedom to her embroidery-frame: for ſo antiquated and abſurd were his ideas, that he fancied young ladies ſtill employed two or three hours of the day in working: nor would he have believed Mrs. Methwald herſelf, had ſhe informed him, that the riſing female generation found their time wholly filled up in ſtudying botany, modern philoſophy, and the *theory* of morality ——in ſhuffling Iriſh ſteps to the tune of *Go to the devil and ſhake yourſelf*—in playing tolerably well, or intolerably ill, upon two or three inſtruments—and laſtly, in dreſſing *a la grecque*, and *practiſing* ſoft manners, or indulging in farotable manners, according to the whim of the day. Roſella did not however laugh in his face at the barbariſm he had uttered, but took the hint, and withdrew.

She had felt ſufficiently mortified and uncomfortable at the moment of receiving thoſe inſults Mr. Mordaunt's well-meant lecture painfully renewed the remembrance of: and now the intelligence that Lord Morteyne and his ſiſter were acquainted with the circumſtance of her being preſent at ſuch a ſcene, redoubled her chagrin.

"What will they think of me!" exclaimed ſhe; "they will ſuppoſe I am always going where I ought not to be, and ever acting with the ſame impropriety."

This idea ſo diſtreſſed her, that in ſpite of her uſual good ſpirits, it produced ſome tears, and

and ſhe reſolved to entreat Miſs Beauclerc never to accept for her any other invitation from Mrs. Ellinger, which indicated, by any promiſed feſtivity, that ſhe might again be introduced to ſuch unpleaſant aſſociates: and indeed at this moment ſhe thought ſhe could be very well ſatisfied to remain at home the whole year round, rather than hazard encountering ſuch vexatious circumſtances.

When Mr. Mordaunt departed, ſhe flew to Miſs Beauclerc, to prefer the meditated requeſt; but obſerving her in tears, and in very apparent diſtreſs, ſhe forgot every idea but that of offering conſolation.

Miſs Beauclerc in a ſhort time recovered to tolerable compoſure, but was entirely ſilent on the ſubject of her agitation. She informed Roſella however, that ſhe meant very ſhortly to make a tour to the northern part of the iſland, principally to amuſe her mind by a change of ſcene, and that ſhe might at the ſame time ſee her aunt Delaval, probably for the laſt time.

Roſella was confounded at this intelligence; for ſhe was not by any means certain that ſhe was to accompany her kind friend, and the chagrin of quitting her, perhaps, for many months, joined to the horror ſhe had conceived at returning to the houſe of Mr. Ellinger, overpowered her ſpirits, and the tears guſhed from her eyes.

"Do *you* then object to remain with me?" exclaimed Miſs Beauclerc, mournfully.

"Me!" cried Roſella; "Oh no: and ſhall I have the happineſs of being your companion in this journey? Did you think of taking me?"

"Yes, my own Rosella," replied Miss Beauclerc, "you *shall* accompany me. I have suffered much," she added, in a faltering voice, "from the harsh reflections I have not deserved; but I could not bear to part with you now, and I will not consent to give either of us such unnecessary anguish. You shall call once more on Mrs. Ellinger before we leave town, and only once, to bid her adieu. I cannot like Mr. Ellinger," resumed she, "or his children; but I think the situation of my friend Selina so pitiable, and I have so many obligations to her, that independent of my affection, I could not be justified in giving her up."

The request Rosella had intended to make, was thus prevented; and as Mr. Mordaunt had so seriously taken up the affair, she was pleased that she had not further wounded the feelings of Miss Beauclerc by adding to his remonstrances, what on her part, would appear a complaint.

Three weeks had not elapsed since Rosella had first heard of the travelling plan, before her friend had so well arranged her establishment to admit of her absence, that she had only further to select those of her domestics she intended to take in her suite; to bid adieu to the few intimates she still retained, in defiance of the melancholy and eccentricity of which she was accused, and to fix the day of her departure.

Rosella, who had equally busied herself in preparation, almost forgot her recent chagrin in the charming prospect of visiting some of those delightful scenes she had read so glowing a picture of, both in real and ideal travellers; and Miss Beauclerc on her side, could think

and

and dream only of wild rocks and mountains, tremendous precipices, fringing woods, gushing cataracts, romantic cottages placed on acclivities and declivities, lovely Jacquelinas, Clarentinas, Rosinas, Emmelinas, and more humble Joannas, Susannas, Cicelys, and Annas who inhabited them, playing upon their lutes, their forte-pianos and their harps, and gazing at the pale moon which never fails to dart its silver beams through their humble casements with such uncommon brilliancy, as to allow them to choose by its pale light a favored poet from their libraries, which it is the etiquette to form of simple shelves, placed against the white-washed, or neatly papered walls; no passing cloud intervening, the chaste orb of night next lends her aid to enable the beautiful recluses to distinguish and recite the most elegant passages from the most elegant authors.—Miss Beauclerc still follows them in fancy, and beholds them transported by the sublimity of their ideas, beyond the bounds of ordinary prudence or common sense; they wander forth, the volume still in their delicate hands, their mild blue eyes raised to heaven, their beautiful auburn hair escaped from its confinement, or restrained only by a simple ribbon (which, alas! would do little towards securing their lovely heads against damps and dews), their white robes flowing in beautiful drapery over their light and nymph-like figures! In this equipage they continue to contemplate and to stray, until they lose themselves in some wild and remote spot, where they gaze round them with astonishment, and start at their imprudence in venturing so far: but they account to themselves very naturally for the error, by the captivation of the surrounding

ſurrounding ſcenery and the delightful ſtillneſs of the night; and the adventure never fails to produce ſomething intereſting or terrific. They return however at length, to their cottage, where ſome good and fond old dame is looking out in infinite anxiety for the ſtray ſheep; ſhe then ſpreads before the delicate young creature her gueſt, the moſt delicious cream and new cheeſe, a profuſion of exquiſite fruit and home-made bread, new-laid eggs, and currant wine. The gentle ſouls make a ſlight repaſt, becauſe no heroine ever yet committed ſuch an indecorum as to eat a plentiful meal; and retire to their exceſſively neat apartments, not to ſleep vulgarly in their bed, but to ruminate on their myſterious deſtinies, and revolve their recent adventure.

In ſhort, ſo delightfully did the imagination of Miſs Beauclerc delineate the gentle wanderers of fiction, that ſhe determined not to defer her own ramble another week, though it was now only the beginning of April; but the ſeaſon, in compliance with her wiſhes, was uncommonly forward, the air mild and genial, the foliage rapidly burſting forth, and the grounds at Avelines ornamented with early flowers.

"My Roſella," ſaid the fond mother, "we will defer our charming tour no longer than till next Monday: to-morrow we will take leave of Mr. Mordaunt, and this morning we will find time to call in Chancery-Lane, and bid adieu to our poor Mrs. Ellinger."

"My dear kind Miſs Beauclerc!" exclaimed Roſella, "how ſhall I repay your goodneſs! If you had reſolved to make this ſweet excurſion without me, and had been now going to leave me at Mr. Ellinger's, how melancholy ſhould I have

I have been at the proſpect of lingering a whole ſummer in that gloomy houſe, tormented by the ſociety of the rude William and ill-tempered Livia! How grateful ought I to be to ſuch a friend!"

"Roſella," replied Miſs Beauclerc, embracing her, "you forget that I have often entreated you to ſpare theſe expreſſions of a gratitude you do not owe me: I cannot be happy without you; and every attention it is in my power to beſtow, all the affection with which I regard you, is leſs than you have a right to claim—I mean from your invariable ſweetneſs of diſpoſition, and the tender reſpect you have ever evinced for me. Beſides, I was well acquainted with your father, and I love you, my dear child, for his ſake."

"And did you know my mother too?" ſaid Roſella, much intereſted in the queſtion: "I have often aſked Mrs. Ellinger whom ſhe reſembled, and ſhe has always told me ſhe was like you in every reſpect:—was my father as amiable?"

"A thouſand times more ſo," returned Miſs Beauclerc eagerly: "but tell me, could you have loved your mother very much, as a mother, if ſhe had been, as Mrs. Ellinger ſays, entirely like me in perſon and mind?"

"I ſuppoſe I ought to have been more attached to her," replied Roſella, "than I am to you; but I really do not think I could have loved her better than you, who have at once been the kindeſt friend, and the moſt indulgent mother to me."

The heart of Miſs Beauclerc was ſo much ſoftened by the affection of Roſella, that the ſecret of their affinity might have been at that moment

moment revealed to her, had not the carriage, which had been ordered for a ſhopping expedition, been announced.

When they arrived at Mr. Ellinger's manſion, Miſs Beauclerc, in contradiction to her general cuſtom, entered it; and having drawn her faithful Selina to her own apartment, that they might diſcuſs, uninterruptedly, their darling project, and ſettle the correſpondence they meditated, Roſella was left in the fitting-room with Miſs Livia, who had been taking a leſſon from a drawing-maſter, and was now affecting to ſhade a delectable ſketch from a print of Charlotte at the tomb of Werter. The *outrée* dreſs of the German heroine, deſigned from the faſhions of the day, and dated at leaſt ten years back, the form without ſymmetry, and the features without meaning, were exceedingly improved by the joint efforts of Miſs Livia and her preceptor, who had, at leaſt, an equal ſhare in the performance to which ſhe was giving the *coup-de-grace*, and Roſella gazed with extreme aſtoniſhment upon the wonders of her pencil.

"You did not know that I was learning to draw?" ſaid the ſelf-ſatisfied ſtudent, with a look of triumph.

"No," replied her viſiter, "I had not heard it: have you learned long?"

"I think you might perceive that I have made ſome proficiency," returned Miſs Livia: "Mr. Dawſon ſays he never gives ſuch ſweet things as I have to copy, but to his very beſt ſcholars. I'll ſhew you my Innocence with her ſweet little lamb—and Abelard and Eloiſa: thoſe are only little things, quite when I began, but here is Una and the Parſon's Maid, and Patty and William at Eve, and Belinda with her

her dog Shock, and the Shepherdeſs of the Alps, and this is——"

"Give me leave," interrupted Roſella, "to look at what you have already laid before me, and then I will examine the reſt of your performances."

She then took up ſome of the caricatures which had been ſo rapidly preſented to her, and unable to outrage truth ſo far as to beſtow upon them any praiſe, again enquired how long the young lady had taken leſſons.

"Oh more than ſix weeks," returned Miſs Livia; "but this is not all I have done, for I aſſure you I have learned to paint landſcapes: here is Hornſey Church and the Bell at Edmonton; and here is a willow, with two ſwans ſwimming under it; and this is a caſtle, Mr. Dawſon does not know where—this ſhould be a tower, to look round like the top of St. Paul's, but ſomehow I blotted it, and it does not ſhow ſo well what it ſhould be: but mama likes this better than any thing I have done yet: ſhe wanted Mr. Dawſon to ſhow me how to put Innocence with her little lamb, to be looking out of this old broken window, becauſe ſhe thought it would paſs for a young lady and a fawn, and then it would ſeem as if ſome gentleman had ſhut her up there, and that the fawn had followed her in when ſhe went to take a walk in the foreſt, which ſhould have been juſt here, mama ſays; this buſh in the corner ſhows where the foreſt ſhould begin.—However, Mr. Dawſon ſaid it could not be done now that the picture was finiſhed; and mama has been teazing him ever ſince to draw an old caſtle and a foreſt and a moon, with a young lady all in white coming out of it."

"Out

"Out of the moon?" asked Rosella, smiling.

"No, no," returned Miss Livia, "you know I don't mean that: out of the castle or the forest, I forget which. And then on one side there is to be a rock, with a cave under it, and you are to see a whole heap of—what are they called?—men who used to rob and murder people above a hundred years ago."

"Thieves and assassins, I suppose," said Rosella.

"No indeed," resumed the young lady, rather contemptuously; "who would think of putting thieves into a picture, dressed like other men, with nothing but pistols in their hands!—no, what I mean is—*banditti*—that's the word. Oh Lord! but I have another secret to tell you—you—you must make believe though, not to know it; for mama thinks to surprise Miss Beauclerc and you when you come back again. She has bought me a piano-*fort*—it's up stairs in the garret, for cross papa must not find it out—so Mr. Strum, who lodges two doors off, gives me sixteen lessons for a guinea."

"Surely you mistake, Livia," said her auditor, who recollected that her own master only attended twice for that sum.

"No indeed: and I can play the Battle of Prague, and the Siege of Bangalore, and Hurly Burly, and the Storming of Trincomalee."

"Already!" exclaimed Rosella: "I should have thought you could scarcely have had time to learn the gamut?"

"Oh, Mr. Strum says it is ridiculous to perplex people who have such an ear as I have, with too much of such hum-drum nonsense; but come, I will show you my piano-*fort*, and you

you ſhall hear me play the Storming of Trincomalee."

Roſella was not without ſome curioſity to witneſs the performance, and followed her to the muſical garret, where Mr. Strum condeſcended to preſide as Apollo, and was amuſed with a compoſition that ſounded like harmony run mad, very vilely mangled, where noiſe and loud uproar ſaluted her ear inſtead of brilliancy and execution. The piano-forte, Mrs. Ellinger's ſecret purchaſe, was old and extremely battered, and in its beſt days had never deſerved a more conſpicuous ſituation that that in which it was now placed.

"There!" exclaimed Miſs Livia, ending with a full chord, fiercely ſtruck, "how do you think I execute? Have you the Storming of Trincomalee?"

"No," replied Roſella, "I never heard it before."

"Good gracious! it's the ſweeteſt thing in the world! I wonder you have not got the Storming of Trincomalee;—ſtay, I am afraid my croſs papa is come home, ſo I cannot play the Siege of Bangalore now; you ſhall hear it another time."

Roſella thanked the young lady for this kind promiſe.

"Let us creep down," reſumed Miſs Livia," "and mind you do not tell mama that I have let you into the ſecret."

Roſella promiſed to attend to the caution, and they deſcended to the ſitting-room, where, inſtead of *croſs papa*, they found Mr. Povey, who had walked up ſtairs for ſome papers depoſited in the old eſcrutoire. He accoſted Miſs Livia's viſiter with a half-confident, half-ſheepiſh grin, and

and enquired if she had seen the Estcourt family lately.

"I know very little of any individual of it," replied Rosella; "they are not in any of Miss Beauclerc's parties."

"Do tell Miss Montrefor," cried Livia, eagerly, "what that droll creature said of her!"

"Of me!" exclaimed Rosella: "who is the droll creature you speak of?"

"My friend Cyril Estcourt, Ma'am: but I shall not repeat his quizzing nonsense."

"Oh I am determined she shall hear it though," cried the obliging young lady: "he said you might be handsome; he did not care a —— whether you was or not; but that you gave yourself confounded airs to Mr. Lesley, considering you had been taken out of a brick-field, where you had spent your *tender* years in mixing up mud pancakes. And he said afterwards that his brother, Lord Morteyne, found you once lying half dead on the Reading road, for you was not the kind of young lady to be kept under any restraint."

The countenance of Rosella was suffused a deep crimson, and her eyes beamed with indignation at this unjust and insolent report, which the malicious informer repeated with equal eagerness and glee.

"Who did Mr. Estcourt tell this to?" asked Rosella, her resentment suddenly giving way to unmixed mortification.

"Lord, I don't know—to a whole room full of people."

"No no, Miss Ellinger," cried Povey, interrupting her, "no such thing; there was only Ashmore, and Lesley, and Morteyne, and Mr. Cressy, and me."

"Well,

"Well, that was a room full, wasn't it?" demanded Miſs Livia, in a voice of angry interrogation.

"At leaſt," ſaid Roſella, hardly reſtraining her tears, "there were enough preſent to anſwer the intention of Mr. Eſtcourt, if he meant that his comments ſhould reach me."

"Lord, Ma'am," ſaid Povey, "nobody minds what Cyril ſays:—now for example, there's me—if I was to kick up a row every time I was hoaxed, I ſhould have little elſe to do."

He then withdrew with his papers, ſaying in a low voice to Miſs Livia, as he paſſed her, "Damme, if I ever tell you any thing again!"

"You only ſay ſo," repled the young lady in a careleſs tone; "I know you will though."

The conference between Miſs Beauclerc and her friend now broke up, and their entrance relieved Roſella from the good-natured communications and obſervations of her companion, with whom ſhe parted however, in apparent civility. Mrs. Ellinger embraced her with pathetic emotion, and conjured her to ſupply every accidental deficiency in the correſpondence of her beloved Sophia.

Roſella promiſed compliance, and returning her adieu, tripped down the *ſombre* ſtairs with a light ſtep. Her delight in quitting the houſe, predominated as uſual over every other emotion; but on her re-entrance into that which ſhe now conſidered as her home, ſhe could not fail to recollect the mortification and chagrin ſhe had received through the officious medium of Miſs Livia and Mr. Povey, and immediately imparted the grievance to her friend, who treated the report with apparent contempt, but who was, in fact, not diſpleaſed that Roſella, beloved as ſhe was,

ſhould

ſhould become the object of tranſient malevolence and miſrepreſentation. Was there indeed a ſingle heroine in the great circle of her reading, who had eſcaped them?—Not one of any celebrity; and this recollection inſtantly reconciled her to the impertinence of Mr. Eſtcourt, who had not forgotten that Roſella was the immediate cauſe of the diſgrace he had endured at the hermitage at Avelines—a diſgrace he could not revenge upon his brother, becauſe he condeſcended occaſionally to have recourſe to his purſe.

The next morning, as Miſs Beauclerc had propoſed, Roſella accompanied her to Mr. Mordaunt's, and contrary to the wiſhes of either, they met Mrs Methwald at home, who happened at the moment to be attended by her daughter and ſon-in-law. Roſella had never before ſeen Mr. Creſſy, and was in conſiderable confuſion during the introduction; when it occurred to her that his opinion, if it was formed upon the cruel reports circulated by Mr. Eſtcourt, muſt be of a moſt unfavorable nature.

Mr. Mordaunt did not immediately appear, and the converſation, after the entrance of Miſs Beauclerc and her companion, was continued upon the ſame ſubject their appearance had given a momentary interruption to.

"I was ſo extremely ſhocked," ſaid Mrs. Creſſy, addreſſing her mother, "that I reſolved never more to ſubject myſelf to ſuch a tormenting purgatory as that of pretending to introduce a young woman into public. Your ſiſter muſt procure herſelf another *chaperon*, indeed ſhe muſt," continued ſhe, turning to her huſband, with a *fade* ſmile, and raiſing up one hand with a prim motion, which extended only to the elbow; "for I would not break my reſolution upon

upon any conſideration : it is unfortunate for her that I happened to be *chagreñée* with this moſt unlucky Miſs—but you are acquainted with my firmneſs of mind, though you cannot know half the provocation I received. As ſhe was left upon my hands, and there happened to be a vacancy in my Opera-box, I thought I might venture to take her ; I ſhall never forget the *horreur* ſhe gave me ! There was not a *gaucherie* ſhe did not torture me with ; ſhe took precedence of Lady Emlin, dropped her fan upon poor Brackin's noſe, who was bowing to me from the pit, and becauſe a large ſcene happened to fall, and a horſe to prance in the grand proceſſion of the ballet, ſhe actually ſcreamed. The Marquis was at my elbow—I thought I ſhould have fainted with ſhame ; however, I had recourſe to my uſual fortitude, and conſoled myſelf with a vow, never to take her out again, were ſhe to live twenty years in my houſe.

This good-natured ſpeech was uttered in a voice ſcarcely above a whiſper, with a monotonous tone of determined placidity ; and it cloſed with a practiſed ſmile. But the lady was not yet ſatisfied with having hitherto been the only ſpeaker, for ſhe addreſſed her mother again, without ſuffering any other perſon to utter a ſyllable —

" Do you go to Lady Emlin's aſſembly Ma'am ? I have nothing in the world but old dreſſes to wear ; but I can't afford myſelf any thing juſt now : my Opera box and court-dreſs have abſolutely ruined me."

This declaration ended like the laſt, with a ſmile that drew up her cheeks, naturally prominent, almoſt to her eye-brows. Mr. Creſſy returned the ſimper with an air of approbation, but could no longer allow her fatiguing loquacity

city to exclude him from shining in the conversation; and he paid his court to Mrs. Methwald by a number of compliments, which he meant should be extremely insinuating, requiring her judgment upon some delicate pastoral poetry, and some elegant little fugitive pieces he had lately procured for her.

His Lady was too well-bred to interrupt him, and amused herself *en attendant*, with gazing *non chalamment*, alternately at Rosella and Miss Beauclerc, who felt offended at the very little attention the family party had shown to her, and had taken up the newspaper whilst she waited the appearance of Mr. Mordaunt.

Mrs. Methwald was in an agony of fidgets, which her son-in law vainly endeavoured to remove by the most assiduous respect, and he only increased the sharpness of the thorns upon which the poor lady sat. The important subject of anxiety which was torturing her soul, was twofold—she was sensible that Miss Beauclerc felt herself treated with slight; and she would have enquired into the state of her health, have recommended books to her notice, pointed out a charming *jeu d'esprit* in the last week's paper, and displayed her last number of the Botanical Magazine, had not her whole countenance, all her nods, smiles, and assents, been wrested from her by Mr. and Mrs. Cressy. Her daughter, the first of women, must always be a primary object wherever she went; and she could not appear to turn abruptly from Mr. Cressy's elegant attentions: men were capricious—they must be kept always in temper she knew, and Mrs. Cressy's happiness was her grand consideration. On the other hand, a guest suffering under a moment of neglect, missing those little sources of entertainment

entertainment and instruction which were always to be found with Mrs. Methwald, she could not endure to think of. She recollected too, that she had seen but the day before, an embroidered muslin at Dyde's, that would just make up for Mrs. Cressy, and reward her projected self-denial—the muslin was cheap and pretty, and might be sold whilst she was detained at home.

Mr. Cressy had, by this time, begun to think Rosella a very captivating little nobody, and was calculating how much credit might accrue to him, if by his notice and encouragement, with an occasional oath and compliment in her favor, he should succeed in bringing her forward. "She is handsomer than Lady Elizabeth Waldon," thought he, "notwithstanding her want of manner, and that she has no idea of giving her features the right sort of expression; upon my soul, with management, she might be made a most fascinating creature."

The result of this private conclusion made Mr. Cressy throw himself into a chair by the side of Rosella; he smiled upon her to lessen the embarrassment he had no doubt she would feel at an honor so unexpected, and enquired if she had been to see the exhibition of work which did so much credit to her sex. Rosella answered in the affirmative, and he immediately favoured her with his opinion of its merits.

Mrs. Cressy, surprized at the uncommon condescension of her husband, hunted nevertheless for her most approving and gracious smile, and having cast it over her features, regarded him and his fair companion with steady suavity, to announce that she had too much fortitude to be jealous.

"You

" You have not been introduced to Lady Elizabeth Waldon, I presume ?" said Mr. Cressy.

" No, Sir."

" But you have met her in society ?"

" I do not recollect that I have," replied Rosella.

" Most certainly then you have not then," resumed Mr. Cressy, determined to begin his preceptorship immediately, " or you could not have forgotten so fascinating a woman. I would recommend to every young lady now entering the world, to study her manner ; there is such a captivating vivacity in her countenance, such uncommon softness of accent, such an insinuating gentleness of motion, such harmony of action, such flexible delicacy of voice, and such refinement of sentiment——"

" If she is a woman to be held up, without exception of circumstance, to the imitation of a young lady," said Miss Beauclerc, interrupting the panegyric, " the world most cruelly defames her."

The gentleman was nettled at this unanswerable remark, which might perhaps have been made in a louder key than the simpering gabble of Mrs. Cressy.

" No one, I am certain," exclaimed Mr. Cressy, " ever heard her voice raised in anger or rustic gaiety above the silver tones of decorum : in short," added he, with considerable warmth, " were I to propose to the woman I wished most to admire, a model to captivate my approbation, Lady Elizabeth Waldon——"

" Oh, you have already heard it then ?" said Mr. Mordaunt, as he entered the room : " if there is a woman I could less forgive than another, it is that specious devil—married to a man who

who gratified every abſurd whim with doting fondneſs—the mother of three heavenly children, and to deſert them, to abandon their father !—The unhappy babe ſhe pretended to nouriſh at her flinty breaſt, whoſe food was converted to poiſon by her diſſipations, has died in convulſions ; her poor mother, whoſe hands I have myſelf ſeen her kiſs with affected fondneſs, at every ſhort abſence, has been in fainting fits from the moment ſhe learnt the intelligence, and Waldon is now actually in a ſtrait waiſtcoat !"

A ſhort but compleat ſilence ſucceeded to this imperfect, but well-underſtood account. Mr. Creſſy was dumb, and his Lady, who had often experienced a ſecret impatience at his warm admiration for the fallen idol, now felt an equally diſſembled emotion of joy.

" Are we to underſtand, Sir," demanded Miſs Beauclerc, " that the lady has eloped ?"

" I thought I heard you ſpeaking of the circumſtance as I entered," returned Mr. Mordaunt.

Miſs Beauclerc ſmiled, and a ſecond momentary ſilence enſued, which ſhe now thought proper to interrupt by announcing her journey and the intention of her viſit. Mr. Mordaunt ſeemed aſtoniſhed at the ſuddenneſs of the plan, for he had never before heard that it was in agitation ; but whatever might be his opinion, he judged it would have little weight with Miſs Beauclerc, and merely deſired her to bring his little girl ſafely back, in a tone of ſolicitude his pretended gaiety but ill concealed. Mr. Creſſy would have buſied himſelf in deſcribing the moſt charming route, but that his recent diſcomfiture chained his tongue : and Miſs Beauclerc having returned, with equal gravity, the ceremonious farewel of Miſs. Methwald, and the inſipid half

courtesy of her peerless daughter, descended to her carriage. Mr. Mordaunt accompanied her to it, and as he parted with Rosella, who happened to be a few steps behind her—

"Remember, my dear child," said he, with more than usual kindness and energy, "that you leave here a firm, sincere, and affectionate friend: one who will consider an application in any little emergency or distress, as a mark of confidence and esteem. If occasion should stimulate you to make use of this hint, recollect that I urged it."

CHAP. XII.

Rage for cosemented Cottages—for wandering in Wilds obscure—A mysterious stranger.

THE delightful peregrination from which Miss Beauclerc promised to herself and Rosella infinite amusement, numberless adventures, and ultimate happiness, was not, of course, delayed by her. She had settled to take with her only one male domestic, as she had agreed with Mrs. Ellinger that he might be sent out of the way if any interesting occurrence should take place which his presence could mar; and as she might sometimes have occasion for a faithful old servant, whose zeal and fidelity would induce him to expose his safety and life for the protection of his beloved Lady, she fixed upon Simpson who had lived in her family near forty years, and often talked of the joyful day that gave birth to Miss Sophy; a day on which he boasted to

to his fellow domeſtics that he drank part of a bottle of claret at his own expence, though he was only an under footman, to the health of his Lady and the little Miſs.

Miſs Beauclerc's own maid was a grave perſonage, who moved from the houſe-keeper's room to her Lady's apartment, and from her Lady's apartment to the houſe-keeper's room, with infinite dignity and importance; and the firſt of conſiderations with her, was her own proper eaſe and comfort, ſo that Miſs Beauclerc thought it but too probable ſhe would upon the firſt miſadventure, ſuch as being benighted in a foreſt, or overturned at midnight into a marl-pit, conſult her own vulgar ſafety, and demand her wages and her *congé* the very next morning; a want of ſimplicity and affection that would reflect diſhonor on her miſtreſs, and extremely ſully the narrative ſhe intended to tranſmit to her faithful Selina, who well knew that a heroine's attendant is infallibly ſome Babette, or Jeannette, or Annette, who prattles an aſtoniſhing quantity of nonſenſe in the midſt of the moſt horrible occurrences, and is always on the point of betraying her young Lady in her moſt important expeditions, by ſcreaming, or ſneezing, or raiſing a hue and cry after a ghoſt, or clinging to her ſo as to make her drop her lamp. But in the midſt of the miſchief, Babette, Jeannette, or Annette ſhould be extremely intelligent, though full of ſimplicity, and above all other conſiderations ſhe muſt be unalterably attached to her beautiful miſtreſs.

In vain had Miſs Beauclerc caſt her eye upon every *ſoubrette* within her obſervation; no ſuch perſonage could be found; and ſhe was compelled, after conſulting with Selina, to decline

at present the attendance of a female servant, in the secret hope of meeting a more suitable one in some "deep glen," remote from the infection of a too populous neighbourhood.

At length Rosella and her friend placed themselves in the travelling post-chaise, and attended only by old Simpson on a hack horse, left London at six in the morning of a delightful Spring day, more warm and genial than the season in general might promise. Both the fair travellers felt a renovation of spirits as the carriage whirled them from the great centre of dissipation, and left Marybone behind them; and Rosella then, for the first time, thought of enquiring their immediate destination. She learnt that Miss Beauclerc had settled to proceed immediately to the northern counties of England, and then enlarge her excursion to Scotland; after which she had almost resolved to bend her steps to the charming and romantic Principality which has furnished adventurous scenes to so many modern heroines, who have climbed its rugged cliffs, and reposed their beautiful heads in its delightful cottages.

Rosella was perfectly satisfied with the plan, and charmed with the prospect of becoming better acquainted with the "mountain nymph, sweet Liberty," and living in "unreproved pleasures free," without danger of being stigmatized as a hoyden, or a savage rustic. Whilst the imagination of Miss Beauclerc was filled *à l'ordinaire*, with

> Russet lawns and fallows grey,
> Where the nibbling flocks do stray—
> Mountains, on whose barren breast
> The laboring clouds do often rest;

Meadows

Meadows trim with daiſies pied,
Shallow brooks and rivers wide.
Towers and battlements *ſhe* ſees
Boſom'd high in tufted trees,
Where *ſhe thinks* ſome beauty lies,
The Cynoſure of neighb'ring eyes."

At the ſecond ſtage poor old Simpſon quitted his horſe for a hack chaiſe, a change which had previouſly been agreed upon, and he then proceeded with rather leſs fatigue to himſelf.

Miſs Beauclerc found little to intereſt her attention on a well-frequented turnpike road, where the moonlight walks of fair ladies would probably terminate uncouthly, from their being run over by mail-coaches, or being knocked down and robbed in a common vulgar way by a footpad; ſhe therefore purſued her journey with eager rapidity, till the country aſſumed a form ſo diverſified and lovely, that her eyes devoured every object on which they reſted, and ſhe often left the chaiſe, attended by Roſella, to aſcend ſome ſteep, or peep into cottages whoſe romantic ſituations excited recollections and hopes which were generally loſt in the diſguſt occaſioned by awkward cunning, evident deſigns of extorting her liberality, and often a more open and ſhameleſs attack upon her purſe, uttered in tones of whining cant and palpable diſingenuouſneſs. ——The children, inſtead of being ſtrong and healthy, were often pining in dirt and neglect; and in place of the artleſs and careleſs graces of childhood, they almoſt univerſally teazed her by extending their little filthy hands, and petitioning for *a farding*, in voices of ſuch whimpering diſcordance that her ear was tortured by the ſound.

Roſella,

Roſella, though uncommonly fond of children, could not prevail upon herſelf to careſs theſe; and with her friend ſhe generally reſumed her journey in diſappointment.

"I muſt remove ſtill further from the murky ſouth," ejaculated Miſs Beauclerc; "I have not yet attained thoſe regions, where noble ſimplicity and genuine hoſpitality of ſoul urge a peaſant to ſet before the paſſing ſtranger his choiceſt ſtock of food and beverage, cloathe the luckleſs wanderer in his raiment, and ſerve him with the hard-earned fruit of his toil."

In conſulting the book of roads ſhe had taken with her, ſhe purſued her way in preference through Yorkſhire, and arrived on the fourth day from leaving the metropolis, at Greta-bridge, where the wild aſpect of the country and the apparent ruſticity of the inhabitants induced her to pauſe. From this town Roſella and herſelf made little excurſions to the neighbouring places which could boaſt the allurement of natural beauty; and in one of their rides through the rich valley of Swale to Wenſeley Dale, they were peculiarly charmed with a ſpot in which was ſituated a thatch-roofed inn, where they ſtopped to take refreſhment. It was ſheltered from the bleak winds that ſweep over the eaſtern ocean, by an irregular chain of hills, riſing, as Miſs Beauclerc had often read in the page of fiction, majeſtic, wild and romantic; at their baſe ran a clear and rapid ſtream, which loudly murmured to find its progreſs ſometimes impeded by fragments of rock either time or the war of elements had hurled from the ſurrounding heights; a ſmall bridge of a ſingle arch roſe over the river, which, a few paces further, flowed round the foot of a precipice in a pleaſing curvature, and

was

was for a time loſt to the eye by an overſhadowing grove of hazle-trees, the well-known haunt of all the village ſwains and laſſes for five miles round. But theſe were not the ſole attractions of the ſpot to the enthuſiaſtic fancy of Miſs Beauclerc ;—the grove, when ſeen from the oppoſite bank of the ſtream, diſcloſed the white chimney and part of the roof of the little manſion to which ſhe had been conducted, which thus viewed, might, without any indecorum of idea, have formed a retreat for the moſt captivating and ill-treated young lady that ever took refuge from the purſuit of lovers, or the calumnies of the world. A white chimney and thatched roof peeping out of a grove encircled by immenſe rocks, margined by a daſhing ſtream ! ! !

" I feel ſo much fatigued," ſaid Miſs Beauclerc to Simpſon, as ſhe returned from a delightful ramble, " that I will have the horſes again taken from the carriage ; and if the people here can accommodate us for a day or two with tolerable convenience, I will lay by a little, and recruit my ſtrength before I proceed further on my journey."

Simpſon, whoſe old bones had been vehemently diſcompoſed by a continued and wearying motion of ſo many days, exceſſively approved the propoſal, and haſtened to give orders, and make the neceſſary enquiries ; whilſt Roſella, happy as youth, health, and innocence could make her, was ſatisfied either to advance or repoſe, as her friend thought proper.

The inn, if it might be dignified with the title, was diſcovered to contain a tolerable lodging room, furniſhed with two old faſhioned beds, that appeared to have made a heavy impreſſion upon the ancient floor, which evidently ſunk in the

the places where they ſtood. This, however, might have been a fault in the grand conſtruction of the building; for the ſurface of the boards was ſo exceedingly uneven, that a Noctambulo might very well have ſuppoſed himſelf aſcending to the turrets of an old caſtle, or deſcending to its caverns without moving from the precincts of his bed-room. This could not fail to prove an inconvenience to any fair heroine who paces her chamber after the extinction of her midnight lamp; but fortunately Miſs Beauclerc overlooked the circumſtance, becauſe the window, which was a little ſhattered and crazy, happened to be a real, original, green glaſſed, ſmall ſquared caſement, encircled by a creeping plant whoſe firſt ſhoots were juſt expanding; and though they could not be miſtaken for "the ſweet-briar, or the vine, or the twiſted eglantine," yet at the moment Miſs Beauclerc put her head out of the little window, a ſparrow neſtled amidſt the budding leaves, and chirupped with great glee.

Such a ſweet rural welcome inſtantly decided her ſtay at this charmingly retired ſpot for at leaſt a week, and in a quarter of an hour Roſella and herſelf were completely eſtabliſhed in their new quarters.

They aroſe the next morning with alacrity, to *wander* amidſt the mountains that ſurrounded them, and gaze over the wild and deep vallies they overhung. Miſs Beauclerc was now in the haven of her expectations; but not having been accuſtomed to theſe wandering delights, after having walked ſome time ſhe felt much fatigued, and ſeated herſelf *en heroine* upon a fragment of rock.

A few yards beneath her the river murmured over its craggy bed, and on the further banks ſtood

ſtood the ruins of a mill half hid by trees that grew in luxuriant wildneſs upon the ſteep aſcent that formed a background to the deſerted building. Miſs Beauclerc drew a book from her pocket, and indulged herſelf in the pleaſure of reading the mountainous adventures of a moſt mountain loving damſel, in a ſpot ſo congenial: whilſt Roſella, delighted with the ſemblance of freedom ſhe now enjoyed, and charmed with every paſſing gale that kiſſed her glowing cheek, flew from cliff to cliff, inhaling the freſhneſs of the early morning, and expreſſing the fulneſs of her contentment in ſmiles and geſtures of delight. Miſs Beauclerc often raiſed her eyes from her book, to mark her ſtep, now rapid from the impulſe of curioſity, now arreſted by wonder and pleaſed attention, and thought that her lovely figure highly adorned the ſcene. At length her friend obſerved her running with more than ordinary ſpeed; and ſtrongly biaſſed by the tenor of her immediate ſtudies, expected, with mingled horror and palpitating rapture, to ſee her purſued by twenty lurking banditti at leaſt, in green velvet caps, with plumes of yellows and black doublets and hoſe trimmed with ſcarlet; ſhe even pictured to herſelf the figures of the liveried ſpoilers all ſo tall and muſcular, armed with arquebuſſes and long ſabres.

Roſella reached her, however, without purſuit, but ſo extremely out of breath, that it was ſeveral minutes before ſhe could articulate that ſhe had ſeen a man on the ſummit of the further rock, ſometimes walking very quickly, at others as ſlowly, talking to himſelf in a very diſturbed manner, and often ſtriking his hand upon his forehead with frantic agitation. Miſs Beauclerc

liſtened in eager attention, but looked round in vain for the hero.

" I was frightened at his vehement motions," continued Roſella; " yet he has not the appearance I imagine a madman to have, nor does he look like a robber, but there was ſomething very ſtrange in his manner."

" Is he handſome?" aſked Miſs Beauclerc, haſtily; forgetting, at that inſtant, all caution and reſerve in the tranſporting hope of meeting with an adventure worthy the ſublimeſt efforts of her pen.

" I did not obſerve his face," replied Roſella.

" Was he in the habit of a gentleman?"

Roſella believed ſo; " He looked unhappy," ſhe added, " and as if he had committed an action he repented."

" No, my love," ſaid Miſs Beauclerc, ſagely, " I rather think he has ſuffered wrong than done wrong; which way did he take?"

" I believe he came this way; ſhall we return to breakfaſt?"

Miſs Beauclerc aſſented; but lingered ſo repeatedly, and looked behind her ſo often, that it became evident to Roſella ſhe had no fear, at leaſt, of the bugbear her own apprehenſions had rendered formidable.

At a turning of the path they followed, which bent in ſudden curves with the windings of the river, the object, whoſe approach was ſo much deſired, and ſo much deprecated, unexpectedly appeared: he ſtarted, and regarding Miſs Beauclerc and her young companion with earneſt, but momentary glances, paſſed on. Roſella felt her heart palpitate when ſhe diſcerned the moody wildneſs of his eye: but his quiet departure relieved

lieved her, and preſſing the arm of her friend, ſhe whiſpered her ſatisfaction at it.

The ſtranger turned at this moment to ſurvey them once more, and his attention was arreſted by the countenance of Roſella, which was turned full upon him: he ſtood a few ſeconds without motion, and then perceiving the alarm he had occaſioned, advanced with an air of eaſy politeneſs, whilſt he addreſſed them in a manner gentle and inſinuating: "I hope," ſaid he, "I am not a ſubject of terror to you, ladies?"

The unexpected change in his countenance, and the tone of his voice, which was calculated to quiet apprehenſion, revived the courage of Roſella, and the fugitive dimples again returned to her cheeks, while Miſs Beauclerc interchanged with the ſtranger the compliments of the morning: and he probably conceiving that the romantic beauty of the ſpot which marked the rencontre, and its remoteneſs from the grand centre of etiquette and eſtabliſhed ceremonials, would authorize the freedom of continuing the converſation, ſauntered with them towards their little habitation, which Miſs Beauclerc had ſoon an opportunity of pointing out to him as being ſuch.

The ſtranger enquired how long ſhe had honored ſuch a cottage by becoming its inmate, and proceeded to queſtion her, but without any appearance of impertinent curioſity, concerning the route by which ſhe had arrived at it. On learning that her companion and herſelf had recently quitted the metropolis, he eagerly aſked the news of the day; but Miſs Beauclerc profeſſed to have paid little attention to the political or domeſtic reports in circulation at the moment of her journey.

They

They were now near the hôtellerie, and Simpſon, who had with ſome difficulty procured materials for breakfaſt, was looking out for the return of the ladies; and the ſtranger on obſerving him, haſtily bade farewell to his fair aſſociates, and hurried back the way he came, without waiting for the invitation that hung upon the lips of Miſs Beauclerc, that he would join their repaſt.

"This man has a very intereſting countenance," ſaid ſhe to Roſella, when they were ſeated at the breakfaſt table; "he has certainly too the moſt captivating manners I ever beheld!"

"He appeared good-humoured," returned ſhe, "but I thought his gaiety ſeemed forced: he ſometimes ſtarted and looked round him, I obſerved, with a very diſturbed aſpect."

"He was merely abſent," replied Miſs Beauclerc; "he has probably ſome painful recollections haunting his mind, or has reaſons powerful and imperious, that impel him to reſiſt the ſoft ſenſations now pervading his breaſt for the firſt time."

The entrance of old Simpſon with poſt letters, which a meſſenger had been diſpatched to Gretabridge in purſuit of, prevented Roſella from obtaining an explanation of her friend's laſt words; and the novelty of ſeeing a letter addreſſed to her, effaced them entirely from her memory: ſhe eagerly opened it, whilſt Miſs Beauclerc, unfolding a large packet of writing, exclaimed, "Amiable Selina!" how active to gratify your abſent friend! I could ſcarcely have expected ſuch a pleaſing mark of attachment until tomorrow."

The correſpondent of Roſella proved to be the accompliſhed Miſs Livia, who wrote, ſhe ſaid, becauſe her mamma ordered her to do ſo; not

that

that she had any thing particular to say, only that her cross papa had broke her piano-forte to pieces, and turned Mr. Strum out of the house; and that Mr. Povey had run away and hid himself, and nobody could find him for above a week; so his uncle had been in a fine fright, and had bought him a commission in the Guards, or else, Mr. Povey threatened to enlist himself, to spite the old man.

All this important intelligence was read by Rosella with more indifference than the conclusion of the epistle, in which Miss Livia begged she would answer her letter, and tell her all the news she could think of, in return for her own communications; a task Rosella would most willingly have excused herself from undertaking.

When Miss Beauclerc had very attentively perused her voluminous epistle from the most amiable Selina, she prepared with more than usual glee and good-will to write her, in the words of Livia, all the news she could think of; and chose, as the most eligible situation for an occupation so important, the rural window of her own chamber, which afforded her a hint for the following amusing, novel, and most heroic paragraph:—

"I am now, my kind and gentle friend, seated at the little casement of my humble apartment, which offers the most enchanting prospect of varied beauty, the most delightful and admired landscape writer ever dissected. My beautiful Rosella, that darling girl, is now adorned with more than usual loveliness, amusing herself by playing with the children of our honest host

and

and hoſteſs on the ruſtic lawn before the door"—this was actually the caſe—"I will now therefore, comply with your earneſt requeſt to learn our adventures."

Miſs Beauclerc now pauſed in her career of narrative; and at this moment the fair ſubject of her eloquent pen called to her to ſay that ſhe was going to walk a little way with the children, who, encouraged by her careſſes, importuned her in an accent ſhe could ſcarcely comprehend, to go with them to ſome place ſhe could not diſtinguiſh the name of: but they pointed to the road up the hill, and entreated ſo earneſtly, that Roſella was as eager to gratify them, as they could be to receive gratification. Miſs Beauclerc readily aſſented, in the hope that ſhe might again meet the *myſterious ſtranger*, and thus continue the adventure in ſtyle; and Roſella immediately ſuffered her little companions, a girl and a boy, who appeared about four or five years old, to lead her forward.

They took a path leading to an eminence that overlooked the chimnies of the diminutive manſion they quitted; and the heat of the ſun, joined to the fatigue of aſcending an almoſt perpendicular ſteep, made the way ſeem long to Roſella; but her aſſociates climbed up very nimbly, with a fearleſs dexterity that proclaimed they had been accuſtomed to the taſk, and very much approved it. At length they arrived at the ſummit of the hill, the little girl holding Roſella by the hand, the boy leading the way in a full trot, which he was obliged, however, to ſlacken every other minute, that he might allow his ſiſter and her *protectrice* to overtake him; and

and in another quarter of an hour they reached the goal at which their infantine wiſhes pointed.

It was a very forlorn little cottage, raiſed againſt a mountain's ſide, with a level of about ſix feet before it, from whence any deſpairing perſonage might, with the ſmalleſt trouble, precipitate themſelves ſeveral fathoms, without danger of breaking their deſcent, except from a few jutting craigs, that might perchance have ſuſpended a woe-worn lover between heaven and earth, "a ſpectacle for gods and men!"

The children ran into the hut, the door of which was open, whilſt Roſella found her attention too much engaged by the tremendous beauties of the place to follow them: no poetic deſcription of roaring cataracts, cloud-capt hills, and yawning abyſſes came to her aſſiſtance, or aided her to give birth to her admiration and aſtoniſhment; no elegant ſoliloquy, uttered in a melodious voice, directed a liſtening ſwain to the ſpot—her animated ſatisfaction was ſtrongly but ſilently expreſſed. No touch of a die-away lute, no ſilver tones of a celeſtial flute or oboe announced the approach of the *myſterious ſtranger*; yet the myſterious ſtranger at this moment approached, to gaze perhaps unſeen upon the lovely figure of the fair angel he had ſo unexpectedly encountered in the early morning!—— Ye gods, no! he approached to depoſit a dirty ſhirt in Molly Spanger's waſh-tub, and with a mind almoſt wholly intent upon breaking his faſt with the oaten cakes and ſkimmed milk in Molly Spanger's larder.

Gentle genius of romance, be appeaſed! The recognition was made on either ſide in due form; Roſella looked round, the myſterious ſtranger ſtarted; Roſella bluſhed, the ſtranger bowed;

bowed; she smiled, and he forgot his twofold errand, approached her with courtly ease, and having expressed much pleasure at this second meeting, pointed out to her more immediate observation the most prominent features in the landscape, in the terms of an amateur of the beauties of nature, and enquired if she was in the habit of delineating them.

Rosella replied that she was not, for that she had more inclination than genius for so charming an employment; but the stranger declared himself incredulous of the assertion, and expressed a wish to see her make an essay of her art in tracing the scenery that surrounded them. Rosella had however the modest opinion of her ability which she professed, and persisting in affirming it, the stranger at length reluctantly yielded to her decision, and changed the subject of conversation from an art to a science. Music was now his theme: having spoken of those instruments in use in the female world of fashion, and gathered from her replies how far she was mistress of them—"There is," said he, "a charming echo not more than fifty paces from this spot, which I think would produce a fine effect, if called forth by the modulations of a voice such as I judge you possess: you plead guilty," continued he, smiling, "will you allow me to conduct you to the "airy cell" of the "unseen nymph?"

Rosella was on the point of complying; but a sudden idea of impropriety intervened, and after a moment of hesitation, she excused herself by saying she had two little companions in the cottage, who might miss her if she left the door. The stranger bowed his head with an air that seemed to say he comprehended her motive, and allowed

allowed it. In the moment of silence that ensued, his countenance lost it's tranquil ease; he gazed round him as if he had awakened out of a dream, and every feature underwent a sudden convulsion. Rosella, much alarmed, immediately entered the hut which contained only its youthful visiters; but she felt even their presence a protection, and having recovered from the panic that had seized her, she had leisure to observe their actions: the boy was mounted upon a stool, endeavouring to open an old beaufet, which refused to obey his efforts; and the girl then told her in melancholy accents, that Molly was gone out, and the nuts were locked up.

"Since it is so," replied Rosella, "we will return home; for I should be sorry to be a party in carrying off the least portion of your friend Molly's treasures in my first visit to her habitation, and in her absence."

The boy very unwillingly gave up his pursuit, and at her desire followed her out of the cottage. Rosella looked round for the stranger, but he had vanished. "How odd was his conduct!" thought she; "I wish I had bidden him farewell! Perhaps he was offended, or hurt at my abrupt retreat."

At her return to the hôtellerie, she found that Miss Beauclerc had laid by her writing, and was waiting her appearance with some impatience; the fact was, that she had exhausted her materials for the narrative to her gentle Selina, and having been compelled to leave her unknown hero in the act of breathing his first complement of sighs in honor of Rosella's charms, she was eager to procure the further information she had no doubt of obtaining in consequence of this second peregrination.

Rosella

Roſella having delivered the children to the care of their mother, haſtened to attend the ſummons of her friend, and being very cloſely queſtioned, contrived to recollect the principal part of the converſation which had paſſed between herſelf and the myſterious ſtranger; but ſhe was far from being able to relate every word of it, and apply the appropriate geſtures, with the copious accuracy that always accompanies the aſtoniſhing narratives of thoſe heroines with never-failing memories, who contrive to recal every thought and word of their childhood, and recollect every ſentiment, ſentence, and ſingle expreſſion of all their friends and all their foes, their papas, their lovers, their nurſes, and their waiting damſels.

Miſs Beauclerc was however extremely well ſatisfied with the account ſhe obtained from Roſella, and the hiſtory for the peruſal of the gentle Selina went on *à merveille*. The remainder of this momentous day was paſſed, as the lady herſelf expreſſed it, in "tranquil ſerenity;" that is, Miſs Beauclerc wrote her intereſting narrative, and read another equally intereſting from the large packet of books ſhe had brought with her from her Circulating Library; and Roſella, for lack of ſomething better to do, played with the children, and taught them their letters.

CHAP. XIII.

A ſtorm, and a diſcovery.—A hero's retirement.

ON the following morning Miſs Beauclerc by no means forgot to repeat her early walk with Roſella

Roſella: ſhe would not lead exactly to the ſame ſpot, but ſhe was careful to paſs near it, in the hope of ſurpriſing her newly-found hero in the firſt delightful meditations of love. Her watch had informed her that when ſhe quitted her chamber it was but ſix o'clock; and the ſun had long diſſolved the liquid gems that hung upon the mountain foliage, when Roſella, quite ſatisfied with the length of her ramble, talked of her own hunger, and her friend's wet ſhoes. But Miſs Beauclerc affected for ſome time not to attend to theſe hints, and her perſeverance was at laſt rewarded by the appearance of the *myſterious youth*; he was accompanied by a very beautiful French pointer, who gave loud notice of the approach of the ladies. His maſter ſtarted, turned haſtily to them, and bowed with a grave air, but ſpoke not.

Miſs Beauclerc, ſecretly diſappointed, and rather offended that no ſymptom of rapture ſhould eſcape him at ſuch a fortunate rencontre, returned the ſilent ſalutation, and taking the arm of Roſella, paſſed on. The path they were deſcending was ſmooth and ſlippery, and Miſs Beauclerc either did, or pretended to make a falſe ſtep, which nearly brought her to the ground; —the exclamation Roſella uttered, caught the ear of the ſtranger, who diſcerned in the countenance of the lady the pain which ſhe perſuaded herſelf the accident occaſioned her, and he politely offered to aſſiſt her to the bottom of the hill.

Of courſe they were not mute as they proceeded: Miſs Beauclerc profeſſed her obligation for the attention of the ſtranger, who in return ſummoned his native gallantry to his aid, and talked of being much indebted to chance for his preſent

preſent enviable ſituation. On ſight of their little habitation, Roſella, unconſcious of the dignity of heroiſm, expreſſed a moſt vulgar inclination for her breakfaſt; and Miſs Beauclerc recollecting the haſte with which her ſupporter had retreated the preceding day, ſeized the opportunity of inviting him to partake their meal. He declined the honor in terms of regret, but without aſſigning any motive for his refuſal.

"Perhaps," ſaid Roſella innocently, "ſome other time will be more convenient to you?"

He bowed in ſilence.

"I cannot be ſo indecorous," thought Miſs Beauclerc, "to urge him further."

At this moment the dog, who had followed his maſter's ſteps very cloſely, paſſed him, and ran forward, barking violently: the ſtranger called him back in a tone of anger, and as the poor little creature returned, menaced him with a blow.

"Oh don't beat him!" exclaimed Roſella eagerly, and ſhe ſtooped to careſs the animal, who crouched in terror; its maſter coloured violently, and with a conciliating action invited a reconciliation.

"Poor Pet!" cried he with a thoughtful look, "you have not been accuſtomed to rough treatment!"

"Is his name Pet?" aſked Roſella; "ah, I ſee he has been uſed to wear a collar; has he loſt it?"

The ſtranger appeared confuſed, and anſwered with heſitation that he had.

Miſs Beauclerc loſt not one word or a ſingle tint of the changes in the countenance of the unknown youth, and had formed a variety of conjectures concerning this Pet of declining intereſt,

tereſt, which ſhe concluded had been the gift of ſome fair favorite, whoſe image in the ſtranger's heart, had been ſuperſeded by the more lovely one of Roſella. Before the ladies reached the inn, he ſuddenly ſtopped, and withdrawing his arm from Miſs Beauclerc, bade her good morning, and caſting an expreſſive glance of cordiality at her companion, left them precipitately, followed by poor Pet, who often looked back on his fair protectreſs as he trotted away.

" This is very myſterious !" exclaimed Miſs Beauclerc ; " how ſtrange that he ſhould again turn away exactly at this ſpot !"

In ſpite of his vehemence in correcting his little dog," ſaid Roſella, " he appears amiable, eſpecially when he ſhakes off that melancholy which ſeems to attend him. He ſays Pet is not uſed to rough treatment ; I ſhould like to know if the animal has always been his."

" It will not be eaſily diſcovered, I ſhould imagine," ſaid Miſs Beauclerc, " for he is wonderfully cautious ; and the myſtery of the dog is not likely ſoon to be unravelled."

" What myſtery do you allude to ?" aſked Roſella, in ſome ſurpriſe.

" A myſtery time will undoubtedly unveil to our eyes," reſumed the lady, " and we muſt wait the elucidation of it with patience.

Roſella readily agreed to have all the patience required ; and juſt at that moment catching a view of Simpſon, demanded if the breakfaſt were ready. Whilſt ſhe was employed in making it, her thoughts reverted inſenſibly to the ſtranger, and after ſome muſing, ſhe concluded that his mind muſt be a little diſordered —a circumſtance the people of the houſe could aſcertain, if he reſided in the neighbourhood ; and

and she mentioned her conjecture to her friend, who agreed that Simpson should make some enquiries of the landlord. No one in the house, however, could give any information of the young man, though Rosella described both the master and the dog very minutely; and as Miss Beauclerc fully expected he would still remain *the Incognito*, in spite of every effort that could be made to discover who he was, she was not surprised or chagrined that her suspicions were just. The first part of her journal, which contained numberless surmises concerning the developement of the adventure, had already been sent off by a special messenger to the neareſt post-town, from whence she was now awaiting the arrival of several articles of travelling appendage, for which she had written four days back; and as the commission had been given to the indefatigable Selina, she knew the execution of it would not be delayed.

Rosella, not having the same expedient as her friend to wear out the lagging hours, and not chooſing, from an intuitive motive of delicacy, to repeat her ramble with her little playfellows, began to grow rather weary of this divine retreat, in which sentiment, so little partaking of the sublimity of heroism, she was heartily joined by old Simpson, who now found himself better able to continue flying after his Lady's tantrums, as he privately expressed himself, and had quarrelled with his wretched cock-loft and his forlorn pallet bed.

In the course of the morning, the courier Miss Beauclerc had employed, returned with a large trunk brought by a stage from London; and the man had hired a cart to convey it from the town where it had been left. Rosella, charmed

ed with the prospect of passing an hour in some kind of employment, solicited to unpack it; and Miss Beauclerc readily consenting, it was taken to their chamber immediately.

Amidst a variety of books, writing-paper, sheets, pillow-cases, &c. Rosella drew out some newspapers, and recollected that the stranger had enquired the news of the day with considerable anxiety; she renewed the circumstance in the remembrance of her friend, and with her usual alacrity to confer a benefit, asked if the papers might not be conveyed to him.

"He may," replied Miss Beauclerc, "have reasons very important for concealing himself, and we should perhaps do him an injury by exposing him to the notice of any one; and yet the intelligence he might gain from these papers might be essentially useful to him. I think, my dear Rosella, you may without any danger to yourself take them to that hut you visited yesterday; and if the woman has any knowledge of him, she will take charge of the packet for him; even if she has none, you may perhaps meet him by the way."

"I hope not," said Rosella, hastily; "I think he did not seem inclined to speak to us this morning: he may think me impertinent or officious."

"What a ridiculous apprehension!" interrupted Miss Beauclerc, who, in her extreme eagerness to pursue this delightful adventure, entirely lost sight of decorum. "Take the children with you, and leave the papers at the cottage, with an injunction to the woman to present them to the gentleman, if she should see him wandering in her neighbourhood. I am fatigued and busy, or I would accompany you.

It

It is probable that you will merit the thanks of this poor man by the effort; and I am sorry to observe that you are rather unwilling to make it."

Rosella, perceiviug that her friend spoke with a gravity she seldom used to her, instantly prepared to obey her, though with a reluctance she could not conquer. She put the papers up, and descended to enquire for her little companions: the boy she learned, was absent from home, but the girl, who was the younger of the two, very eagerly accepted her invitation to walk to Molly Spanger's cottage, and seizing the hand of Rosella, led the way up the path, talking all the way "of the nuts locked up in the cupboard, which Molly had promised to give her when she came to see her."

Rosella was diverted with her prattle, and almost forgot the unwillingness with which she had undertaken her commission, in the pleasantness of the walk, which received no check, as on the preceding day, from the too great fervor of the sun: the harebell and violet began to unfold their humble beauties, and scent the passing gale with renovating sweets, and the blackbird made the wooded precipices reverberate his clear and mellow note.

"This is charming!" ejaculated Rosella; "I am again reconciled to the place."

She had now reached the brow of the mountain, and her little guide looking round with much perplexity, exclaimed, "Where's Molly's house?"

"To the left," answered Rosella, "we have not come wrong, I hope."

"Johnnie knows the way," cried the child; Johnnie always comes with Molly."

"And

"And did not you?" enquired Roſella.

"No, only once; Johnnie knows the way beſt."

Roſella now began to fear that this aſſertion was too true; for ſhe had turned to the left, as on her firſt viſit to the hut, but could not obſerve one object which ſhe then recollected to have remarked. "We have loſt our way, Patty," ſaid ſhe.

The child looked gravely up in her face, but made no reply; and Roſella, rather chagrined, yet without any fear of recovering her track, endeavoured to remedy the error by turning into another path, in which ſhe walked for ſome time; ſtill, however, no cottage greeted her view. "We have loſt our way, indeed,' repeated ſhe.

"Can't we never go back again?" aſked Patty.

"Oh yes," returned Roſella cheerfully; "but we muſt have a little patience."

"I tired!" cried the child in a ſtill more aggrieved voice.

"Already!" exclaimed Roſella; "no, no, you are not tired yet; you will not be tired till you go home."

"I hungry!" reſumed Patty, half crying.

Roſella was by this time alarmed; for in endeavouring to regain the right path, ſhe inſenſibly found herſelf in the moſt wild and dreary range of mountains, which ſeemed reared by ſome enchanter to guard from human eye, the agitated ſtream that ruſhed with rapid and noiſy violence in the deep glen beneath. "What ſhall I do?" exclaimed ſhe in extreme anxiety.

"I dry!" was now the burthen of poor Patty's ſong.

" Have patience, my good little Patty," repeated her companion; " tell me, is there any other cottage near Molly's?"

" I don't know—I dry!"

Roſella looked round her, ſhe looked down the precipice before her, and gazed upwards towards the mountain's ſummits, but neither hut nor hovel rewarded the ſearch: ſhe diſcovered, however, that the clouds rolled black and angry over her defenceleſs head, and thought ſhe heard them breaking at a diſtance againſt the craggy rocks in low peals of thunder. Nor were her fears groundleſs; in a few moments a louder exploſion ſaluted her ſhrinking ear, and the innumerable echos of the place continued the fearful ſound, till Roſella imagined the elements were returning to their original chaos. —" I frightened!" ſcreamed Patty; and her companion could ſcarcely ſooth her fears, for her own were almoſt as potent.

At length whilſt the laſt echo was loſing itſelf in diſtant air, a vivid flaſh of lightning, the prelude of another ſhock, illumined the darkened ſcene, and pointed out to her view the waves of the torrent foaming againſt the rocks, and riſing in ungoverned fury to a height incredible. The thunder was more loud and tremendous than before; and the piercing ſcreams of the terrified child added to her diſtreſs and horror.

" What will become of us! where ſhall I turn for ſhelter!" exclaimed ſhe; and taking the arm of little Patty, who was burying her face in her gown, ſhe went forward, though dreadfully appalled by the forked lightning, that darted with an angled movement from one point to another of the rocks that ſurrounded her;

her; in one inſtant it was playing over her head, in another, attracted to the craig beneath her. An immenſe arm of a tree, ſplintered off by its electric ſtroke, fell from the mountain's top with a dreadful craſh, into the bed of the river, ſweeping every thing before it.

Roſella believing that the whole mountain was giving way to the ſtorm, flew with the precipitation fear alone could give, and which equally winged poor Patty's little feet, through the brakes that encompaſſed her, and left the dreadful view, both of the precipice and torrent, behind her. Still however, ſhe ran, and the child forgetting fatigue, hunger, and thirſt, with ſome aſſiſtance kept pace with her, and in a few moments ſuddenly cried out—"There's Molly's houſe!" The eyes of Roſella followed her pointing finger, and diſcovered, not Molly's, but a ſtill more miſerable hut, to which, however, ſhe gladly haſtened. Having reached it, ſhe endeavoured to let herſelf in; but the door was faſtened, and a dog within gave notice of the attempt. Roſella, glad to find the place inhabited, rapped for admittance. "Open a door," cried Patty, "I wet!"

Nobody obeyed this peremptory ſummons, and Roſella knocked harder againſt the inhoſpitable little manſion, expreſſing aloud a wiſh to ſtay only during the ſtorm, which appeared every moment to increaſe. The dog redoubled his barking at this ſecond application, and a haſty ſtep towards the door announced that it was ſucceſsful. It opened——and Roſella beheld the *myſterious ſtranger* acting as porter, and Pet *in propria perſona*, as ſentinel: yet it did not occur to her that the incident was at all remarkable, as ſhe immediately ſuppoſed both dog and maſter

had, like herſelf, ſought ſhelter in the hut againſt the ſtorm. She felt, however, embarraſſed in what manner to make known the motive which had brought her into ſo unpleaſant a predicamant; for the ſtranger, inſtead of expreſſing apprehenſion at the danger ſhe had encountered, and the complete drenching of her garments, inſtead of congratulating her on having found a ſhelter, imperfect though it was, ſtood before her as if every faculty had been ſuſpended, in utter confuſion and diſmay.

" The rain is ſtill very violent," ſaid Roſella in a timid accent, after a ſilence of ſome minutes, which he attempted not to break; " and I think the thunder approaches ſtill nearer."

No reply from the ſtranger, who appeared unconſcious that ſhe ſpoke.

" You live here?" aſked Patty innocently.

He ſtarted at the words, without regarding who uttered them.

" Yes," ſaid he, turning to Roſella; " even here!"

She ſhuddered at the tone in which he ſpoke, and involuntarily looked round upon the clay-walls, and at the half-covered roof, which in ſeveral places admitted the rain, and rendered the mud floor ſtill more forlorn, cold, and miry.

" You gaze in incredulity," exclaimed he; " well you may!—To what chance am I indebted for this viſit?"

" Viſit!" repeated Roſella, inexpreſſibly ſhocked, " the ſtorm——!"

" Oh true! interrupted he; " the ſtorm within made me inſenſible to this jar of elements: well, Madam," affecting an air of gaiety that was more dreadful than the former gloom,

gloom, "I am then to thank the ſtorm for the honour it has procured me: but you ſee I cannot aſk you to ſit in this auguſt manſion, for it does not contain a ſingle chair or ſtool!"

"I am not in the leaſt tired," ſaid Roſella haſtily, "and I prefer ſtanding."

"It is fortunate that you do," returned the ſtranger, drily.

"I very tired," cried Patty; "I want to ſit down."

Roſella would have ſeated her on the floor; but as ſhe caſt her eyes upon it, ſhe obſerved that it was full of little hollow places, which the rain, piercing through the roof, had filled with water. The quick glance of the ſtranger followed her's. "This is not a moment for etiquette," ſaid he; "if you will condeſcend to follow me, your little companion may be accommodated with a ſeat, and yourſelf better ſheltered." Roſella heſitated; but without obſerving her reluctance, he opened a door made of reed, and exhibited a lodging-room every way worthy of his chamber of audience: it was ſecured however from the weather, and contained a bed of ſtraw, on which a ſpencer was thrown, and by the ſide of it a pair of half-boots and a ſmall bundle of linen: two or three books lay upon the floor, and on a torn ſheet of light brown paper was delineated a very pretty charcoal drawing of Molly Spanger's cottage and the ſurrounding ſcenery.

Roſella, who could not believe, until theſe evidences convinced her, that a young man of ſuch a diſtinguiſhed, nay even elegant appearance really inhabited a place ſo forlorn, now experienced an amazement too potent for concealment. The ſtranger turning from her to hide

hide the burning bluſh upon his cheek, took Patty by the hand, and ſeated her upon the ſtraw; amidſt the torture of his mind, which was but too evident, he again attempted an air of levity, whilſt he enquired of Roſella if ſhe ſtill continued ſteady in her preference of ſtanding.

"I do not feel any fatigue," replied ſhe: and indeed the aſſertion was true, for ſhe was wholly engroſſed by the reflections that crowded upon her, from the diſcovery ſhe had involuntarily made, and ſhe began to meditate very anxiouſly upon the difficulties of her return to Miſs Beauclerc. "I think the ſtorm abates," reſumed ſhe; "the lady, with whom you ſaw me this morning, will be very much alarmed at my being expoſed to ſuch weather; and as the child's clothes, as well as my own, are quite wet, I think we had better defy the rain, and return home now that the thunder and the lightning have ceaſed; for I am afraid my friend will not only ſend after me, but perhaps in her terror venture out herſelf."

"Does ſhe know where to ſend?" demanded the ſtranger in great agitation.

Roſella, frightened at the ſudden change of his countenance, from whence all color had fled, ſcarcely knew what ſhe replied, but ſtammered ſomething of the cottage at which ſhe had ſeen him the proceding day.

"And from thence they may be directed here!" exclaimed he in an agony: "Heaven and earth, what a combination of circumſtances to deſtroy me!"

"No, I hope not," cried Roſella in ſuch extreme terror that ſhe trembled in every limb; "I will

" I will try to find my way back to the inn immediately."

Patty, who saw the stranger biting his lips, and stamping in half-restrained frenzy, seized the hand of Rosella, saying softly, " What will he do to us—won't he kill us ?"

" Wretch that I am !" vehemently ejaculated the young man, in an effusion of anguish he could not suppress ; " outcast of the earth—abandoned, contemned, proscribed—— !" Then suddenly recollecting himself, " My emotion has betrayed me," resumed he ; " yet I think I may dare trust to the benevolence of your disposition, that my incautious agony of mind will not lead me to destruction, though it has almost yielded up my secret to your suspicions. Your countenance expresses all that can be conceived of angelic in the human heart ;—yet what have I not suffered from an aspect equally enchanting, that adorned the most depraved of your sex !"

His air was so frantic, that Rosella, too much frightened to reflect upon what she ought, or what she ought not to do, attempted a precipitate retreat, but he caught her arm, and defeated her intention ; and Patty, who now imagined he was assuredly on the point of murdering both the pretty lady and herself, raised her voice to the highest pitch her little throat would admit of.

" Who is this child ?" demanded the stranger ; " she cannot belong to your friend ?"

" No," replied Rosella in a faltering accent, " she belongs to the people of the inn."

" Then I am undone !" returned he in a low tone of anxiety ; " she will report, no doubt, all

all that she has seen, and can recollect to have heard."

"Not if I can prevent her," interrupted Rosella, who felt herself, actuated equally by by fear and compassion to give him this assurance.

An expressive look spoke his thanks, and for the first time she now remembered the papers in her pocket; but that she might not seem to advert to any unhappy circumstance he had darkly hinted at, she produced them, not as inferring that they might be of any use to him, but with an expressed hope that they would afford him amusement.

He eagerly seized them from her, and his eye glancing in haste over them as they remained in his hand, he started, and striking his forehead, vehemently asked who had read them besides herself.

"I have not read a line in either paper," replied Rosella, every spark of pity in her nature awakened at his sensitive apprehensions, "nor has any person seen them since they were sent from London to the lady you saw this morning, who slightly looked over a few paragraphs in each."

"Do you think," said he, "she would allow me to retain these papers? If she could guess how important to me—how——"

He hesitated.

"I think I may be certain" returned Rosella, with more than her usual sweetness of aspect, "that my friend, Miss Beauclerc, will have no further use for them, and in her name I beg you will dispose of them as you please; indeed she desired me to put them in my pocket, in the idea that you might perhaps not dislike to look

look them over; and I—I imagined," continued ſhe, confuſed at the earneſt manner in which he at this inſtant regarded her, "that the woman who lives in the cottage where I ſaw you yeſterday, might be able to convey them to you, and therefore——"

"And therefore," interrupted he, "you ſubjected yourſelf to the inconvenience you now experience, in the amiable humanity of your heart, to relieve the ſolitary miſery of a ſtranger, who betrayed I ſuppoſe, the agitation of a mind at war with peace; and even now you cannot repent the ſhock, the alarm you have received, becauſe you hear me declare that you have inexpreſſibly ſerved me, and but for your gentle condeſcenſion I had been loſt. How can I acknowledge my obligation to your friend? She appeared to me all charity and goodneſs, and I fear ſhe thinks I have repaid her generous civilities but ill. As for yourſelf, who have deigned to become the meſſenger of ſafety to a wretch like me,—what terms can I chooſe to impreſs you with ſome part of the humble admiration I feel for the ſenſibility, the delicate compaſſion you have evinced? You have indeed the figure of an angel, and appear to poſſeſs every gentle attribute the imagination will, ſpite of paſt experience, give to ſuch a form!"

Roſella, bluſhing at the warmth with which he ſpoke, turned from him without replying. She had now executed her commiſſion, and was ſenſible ſhe could not too ſoon return to her little habitation, which ſhe naturally ſuppoſed would be in commotion and alarm for her ſafety and that of the child. The rain had ceaſed, and the ſky was once more ſerene,

which ſhe obſerved, and uttering a farewel compliment to the ſtranger, led to the door, and was joyfully accompanied by Patty. But he ſuddenly remembered that his fair viſiter had ſaid ſhe had loſt herſelf in the ſtorm; and well knowing the difficulty of finding a track in a place ſo wild, offered to conduct her to the path ſhe was acquainted with, which overlooked the roof of the inn. Roſella was obliged to accept the propoſal, though ſhe feared he might encounter either Simpſon or Patty's father; and after the confeſſion of the recluſe, ſhe earneſtly wiſhed to ſpare him any further confuſion and mortification.

They walked ſilently forward for ſome time, the ſtranger, from habitual politeneſs, affording her every aſſiſtance, which the wet by rendering the deſcent of the mountain very ſlippery made extremely neceſſary; though at the ſame moment he appeared abſent, melancholy, and loſt in thought.

At length when Roſella could once more diſcern the chimnies of Patty's little dwelling, ſhe turned to thank the ſtranger for the aid he had given her, when the voice of old Simpſon hallooing her name, made him ſtart from a deep reverie, and taking her hand which he kiſſed reſpectfully, "Farewel!" ſaid he; "I have a requeſt to urge—do you ſtay in this place till to-morrow?"

"We do," replied Roſella.

"Once more then farewel—but not for ever.—I will write an eternal adieu—I cannot ſpeak it!"

He then walked haſtily away, and his dog, who had cloſely attended his ſteps, followed him. Roſella was ſhocked at the ſolemnity with which

which he had uttered his laſt words, and ſtill more at their import. " Does this unfortunate young man mean to deprive himſelf of life," thought ſhe, " that he talks of an eternal adieu ?"

Patty now interrupted the courſe of her fearful ſuppoſitions by calling out in anſwer to old Simpſon——" Here's Lady——I here !" *Lady* herſelf too replied to the vociferations in her own voice, and the poor man advanced with great alertneſs to aſcertain her ſafety:—at the ſame inſtant Miſs Beauclerc met her in the path; for notwithſtanding the charms in her imagination, of an adventure amidſt mountains, cataracts, thunder, lightning, and rain,—her affection, which was neither artificial nor acquired, had predominated over her taſte for the romantic and marvellous, and had impelled her forth, as Roſella had well gueſſed, before the ſtorm had quite ceaſed, that ſhe might aid the reſearches of old Simpſon and the landlord.

" My Roſella," exclaimed ſhe, " you are quite wet ! Good heavens ! you have been wholly expoſed to this tempeſt—you will catch a cold, perhaps a fever, and through my means ! What will become of me if you ſhould be ill ?"

" At preſent," replied ſhe with alacrity, " I feel not the leaſt ſymptom of indiſpoſition ; and I hope Patty has no other ailment than fatigue and hunger."

" Yes," cried the child, " I hungry, and I tired too !"

Simpſon was deſired to carry her home ; and Roſella then in a low voice, as ſhe followed with Miſs Beauclerc, had merely time to ſay that ſhe had ſeen the ſtranger, who was very grateful for an attention which he acknowledged to be of the utmoſt conſequence to his welfare,

before

before Patty's mother and her houſehold damſel overtook them in their way from Molly's cottage, whither they had run in ſearch of the young lady and the child.

Roſella feared that the little girl would recollect the impreſſion of terror ſhe had received at the ſtranger's miſerable dwelling, and repeat more than for his ſafety ought to be known; but fortunately all that poor Patty was inclined to articulate, was, "I dry, I hungry!" and when ſhe was relieved from theſe misfortunes, having been previouſly put to bed, ſhe fell into a profound ſleep, which laſted ſufficiently not only to allow of Roſella's communication to her friend, whilſt ſhe changed her wet garments, and drank the good landlady's poſſet, but gave Miſs Beauclerc ample time to arrange a ſtory that might agree with that of Patty, without ſubjecting the hapleſs ſtranger to the curioſity of the people of the inn, who were by no means numerous, and being generally employed, had not luckily that violent thirſt for gathering knowledge, and collecting amuſing facts and myſterious anecdotes, which may be ſuppoſed to torment a ſupernumerary domeſtic in a houſe of larger dimenſions: and when ſhe contrived to mention in the preſence of the woman of the houſe and her huſband ſeveral circumſtances of the vehement impatience of ſome perſon who had taken ſhelter in the ſame hut with Patty and her companion, and whoſe haſty progreſs had been provokingly impeded by the tempeſt, the good people liſtened very calmly, and did not appear to think any concealed *myſtery* might be *elucidated* by tracing the ſteps of a traveller who rated the thunder, and ſwore at the rain, which they very likely might

might have done themſelves, had they been going to the fair at the next town, or to a chriſtening at any neighbouring village. So that at Patty's levee, when ſhe diſcuſſed in her own way as much of the hiſtory as ſhe could recollect, the only obſervations or exclamations it raiſed, were, "ſure!" and "lauk!" and thus the dreaded report ended, to the generous ſatisfaction of Roſella, whoſe compaſſion was ſtill excited by the remembered agonies of the unhappy ſtranger; as his deſolate ſituation, whether the reſult of misfortune or guilt, could not fail to intereſt a boſom, where he had himſelf juſtly ſaid, all the gentler attributes of innocence and goodneſs reſided.

CHAP. XIV.

An heroic epiſtle—rage for moonlight walks, à la lanterne.

ON the following morning, before the buſy ſpirit of Miſs Beauclerc could deviſe any new plan to heighten the delicious pathos of the poor man's miſery, by contriving for him another interview with Roſella, whoſe charms ſhe was extremely certain were tearing his oppreſſed heart with all the horrors of hopeleſs love, a country fellow brought to the door of the hôtellerie Mr. Pet, the decided hero of an underplot in the tragical drama of the myſterious ſtranger, who, in the opinion of Miſs Beauclerc, was either ſome young Noble, whoſe father had gravely

gravely betrothed him in infancy to ſome embryo heireſs, and who was flying from matrimonial perſecutions—a tale ſhe had met with in her extenſive reading; or that he was at leaſt a Baronet, who had incautiouſly married ſome very handſome and very faſhionable young lady, and now found ſufficient reaſon to repent the precipitation of ill-judged paſſion, in the outrageous conduct of his wife, who after ruining his fortune and her own reputation, embroils the much-ſuffering huſband with her gallant, or any other man, and the conſequences of a ſerious duel had obliged him to hide his injured head—where Roſella ſo fortunately found him: incidents which the memory of Miſs Beauclerc alſo furniſhed.

But whoever the myſterious ſtranger might be, he proved that Mr. Pet was, to him at leaſt, a very important perſonage, by the following letter, which was given to Miſs Beauclerc by the man who had charge of him.

"I believe, Madam, I hinted to your young friend that friend that your condeſcenſion had emboldened me to meditate a requeſt, which perhaps in a being ſo forlorn as ſhe now knows me to be, you will conſider as a preſumption ſcarcely to be pardoned, ſtill leſs to be complied with; yet I muſt augur better from the benevolence of your countenance and manner, when I had the honor of thoſe tranſient interviews which have procured you the trouble of receiving this application.

"The poor little dog, whom I have delivered to the lad entruſted with this ſcrawl, I can no longer,

longer, for reaſons very important, retain with me in my wanderings;—yet I cannot endure to deprive him of life, or drive him from me without ſome hope that he will be taken care of: his original owner reſides near Sedgfield, in Durham. I think you mentioned that you were travelling northward, and I cannot ſuppoſe that you will deviate ſo much from your route, at the requeſt of an unfortunate ſtranger, who is not worthy the conſiderate attentions you have already beſtowed upon him; but ſhould you perchance find yourſelf within a few miles of Sedgfield, and ſhould you then caſt a thought upon the man you have eternally obliged, will you condeſcend to aſſign poor Pet to the care of a perſon to be relied upon, and inſtruct ſuch an one to conduct the dog to Mr. Mompeſſon, whoſe name and family reſidence are well known round the neighbourhood.

"I offer no apology for the freedom I uſe in thus addreſſing you, for I know of no words that would in any degree excuſe it. I truſt to your generoſity not to reject my application entirely; but ſhould you attribute to preſumption what is wholly the effect of miſery and deſpair, and experience only indignation inſtead of the compaſſion I ſolicit, upon the gentle mercy of your charming young friend I caſt my deſerted companion, and I am aſſured ſhe will not ſuffer him to periſh. His maſter ſhe will never ſee more—I hope in heaven ſhe will never hear of him more. To you, Madam, I wiſh every bleſſing this world can give; and to your Roſella, ſo I think you called her, I earneſtly invoke the continuance of that gentleneſs, innocence, and peace which now harmonize her accents, and

enrich

enrich every grace of a form I can never forget.

" By what ſignature to deſign myſelf, I know not—to you I will not ſend a fictitious one, and the name which I received from the beſt and moſt virtuous of patents,—a name I have—but I will end here—I am, Madam,

" A WRETCH."

" P. S.—Yes, you *ſhall* know that one of thoſe papers you ſent for my *amuſement*, the firſt on which my eager eye fell, expoſed to me the imminent danger which you have thus enabled me to eſcape. It was your intervention that drew me back from the precipice on which I ſtood; but I ſtill wander blindfold, and may this moment be again ruſhing to certain death—Oh worſe, a thouſand times worſe—to infamy!"

Miſs Beauclerc twice read this very myſterious epiſtle, which, from the evident haſte and trepidation of the writer, he had juſtly called a ſcrawl, before ſhe recovered her recollection ſo far as to enquire of Simpſon who waited her orders, where the perſon was who brought it. He was in the kitchen, Simpſon replied; ſhould he call him? Miſs Beauclerc aſſented, and the young man appeared, who anſwered her enquiries in the broad Yorkſhire dialect. With ſome effort, however, ſhe comprehended that he had received that ſcrap of paper and the little beaſt he had got with him, from a man he met about two miles off, who was to have carried them all the way himſelf; but he ſaid he had fallen lame, and could not get on, ſo he told him where to come, and offered him a ſhilling

ſhilling to undertake the errand, and the lady, he ſaid, would give him another ſhilling if he brought the letter and the dog ſafe to her.

This was all ſhe could learn; and having fulfilled the covenant which the lame man had made, whom ſhe imagined to be the ſtranger himſelf, ſhe diſmiſſed Simpſon who was burſting with curioſity, and communicated the contents of the letter to Roſella, who had already almoſt reconciled poor Pet to his fate.

She bluſhed at the commendation it ſo laviſhly beſtowed upon her, but ſoon loſt every paſſing emotion in concern for the deplorable ſituation of a perſon who poſſeſſed ſuch diſtinguiſhed attractions. Miſs Beauclerc relieved her anxiety for the deſtiny of the animal ſo ſolicitouſly recommended to her, by ſaying, ſhe would comply with his maſter's evident wiſh, that he ſhould be returned to his *original owner*, and convey him herſelf to Sedgfield. Indeed her own inclination to learn the imprudences or misfortunes which had operated to place Mr. Pet under her protection, joined to a ſtrong hope of encountering ſome very intereſting adventures in ſeeking to *elucidate* thoſe of the ſtranger, would have been alone ſufficient to have urged her to the ſtep, without the aid of that compaſſion he had really excited in her boſom. Simpſon therefore received orders to procure poſt-horſes for the following morning; and Miſs Beauclerc then employed the reſt of the day in converſing with Roſella upon the ſuppoſed diſaſters of the ſtranger, and in writing to her friend Selina a very circumſtantial hiſtory of the turn affairs had taken.

Roſella, when ſhe bade adieu to Patty and her brother, left with them ſuch magnificent marks

marks of her approbation, that Molly's nuts in the cupboard were entirely forgotten; and as Miſs Beauclerc's carriage drove from the door, the little girl, who had become fond of her lovely playfellow, began a cry that threatened to laſt the whole day.

Simpſon was obliged to ride a hack-horſe, not having been able to procure a ſecond pair for a chaiſe, and Mr. Pet was, of courſe, taken into that of Miſs Beauclerc, who was far from being diſpleaſed that ſhe was compelled to ſhew this mark of reſpect to the maſter, in the perſon of the dog. They arrived at Sedgfield in time to dine; and when the repaſt was over, Miſs Beauclerc, ſending for the maſter of the houſe where ſhe had put up, demanded if he could direct her to the houſe of Mr. Mompeſſon, and if he knew any thing of the family. The man looked with earneſtneſs at her whilſt ſhe ſpoke, and after ſome heſitation, replied, that Eideva Lodge was about three miles further, on the Durham road; that Mr. Mompeſſon was a worthy gentleman as ever breathed, —that he believed he was at preſent very ill—and—and he had heard that he was in ſome trouble—but he could not tell for his part—he only knew that he was a very worthy, kind-hearted gentleman.

The manner in which this intelligence was given, very plainly indicated that the informant could ſay a great deal more if he choſe it; but Miſs Beauclerc did not wiſh to foreſtal this delicious myſtery from the vulgar periods of an innkeeper, and reſolved to preſent the dog herſelf to the worthy gentleman, (even if ſhe ſhould be compelled to the indecorum of being introduced into his bedchamber,) that ſhe might behold

hold the effect which the ſudden ſight of Pet would have upon him, and diſcover, from his varied emotions, his pathetic ſoliloquies, and heart-rending ejaculations, the nature of thoſe troubles he was overwhelmed with, and by what intereſt he was implicated thus apparently in the miſeries of the unhappy and ſelf-condemned ſtranger. She had no obſtacle to prevent her from riding or walking immediately to Lideva Lodge, accompanied by the oſtenſible cauſe of her viſit; for the weather was fine, and ſeveral hours of daylight were yet before her; but undertaking a charming adventure, ſuch as this had every proſpect of becoming, by the "gariſh eye of day," was not to be thought of; no, by the ſublime beams of the pale moon the intended to ſhape her penſive courſe towards the manſion of Mr. Mompeſſon, and really perſuaded herſelf that ſhe was under a neceſſity of diſpatching ſeveral letters by the mail of that evening, which happened to paſs through the town at twilight.

Roſella wondered what this ſudden preſſure of letter-writing could be cauſed by, and ventured to hint that the performance of the commiſſion might be deferred till the next morning, as it could not be executed with convenience that evening: but ſuch an arrangement not at all according with the views of her enthuſiaſtic friend, her intimation was oppoſed by a plea of not wiſhing to loſe another day by this affair; and Roſella, who had ever been accuſtomed to obey every wiſh of Miſs Beauclerc, thought her reaſons muſt be all-ſufficient, at leaſt ſhe had neither authority nor inclination to over-rule them.

Whilſt

Whilſt theſe unlucky letters were being written, Roſella found the hours very ſlowly move forward. The houſe was not enlivened by children, who, if they were tolerably attractive, had always the power of amuſing her; and thoſe books which were moſt adapted to the taſte of her friend, and of which there was always a number very conveniently at hand, did not unfortunately agree with her ideas of entertainment; though to do juſtice to her ſenſibility and perſeverance, ſhe could with great patience cry through a dozen pages, and tremble through as many more. But then a continuation of crying and trembling, according as the ſuperb pen of the writer varied from pathos to horrors, and from horrors to pathos, throughout ſeveral volumes, ſhe found far exceeding any curioſity ſhe could feel, to learn in which of the damp dungeons, all over-run with ſpiders and black beetles, the moſt lucky of the heroine's three or four dozen lovers found a clean ſpot to throw himſelf at her feet; and beſides Roſella began to think with Don Quixote when he was upon his enchanted Pegaſus, that, notwithſtanding the variety of curvatures and prancings practiſed to deceive the judgment, ſhe was only, like him, going over and over the ſame ground—always the caſtle and ghoſt before her, let her peep where ſhe would. She had however, at the preſent moment no choice of amuſement, for Miſs Beauclerc continued to write with the moſt unwearied inflexibility; and Roſella took up a volume of charming adventures, written in the ſtyle of a magic lantern, where a duſky ſucceſſion of half delineated figures dance about *à-propos de bottes*, and then diſappear to make way

way for others equally well drawn and equally to the purpose, as the first.

At seven the master of the house entered the room, to say that he was making up the bag for the mail; and as he understood the ladies had some letters to put in, he came to request that they would not detain them much longer. Miss Beauclerc, now obliged to forego her occupation of writing for the post, pleaded fatigue to delay the expedition to Eideva Lodge to a proper heroic hour, and ordered tea. Rosella was chagrined, but preserved silence, though she could not avoid watching the departing sunbeams in great anxiety. "It will be quite dark," thought she, "before we reach the house of Mr. Mompesson; what will he imagine on seeing us at such an hour, invalid as he is too!"

From reflections upon the time in which the visit would be paid, Rosella was led to others upon the purport of it; and for the first moment, it appeared to her in a ridiculous point of view, unacquainted as Mis Beauclerc and herself were with the character of their mountain friend, or what his connection was with the family whose mansion they were thus going to besiege at an hour so undue, when if sickness assailed them, they would be seeking repose,—or if in health, they would most probably be assembled in social gaiety, and neither wish nor expect the intrusion of total strangers, upon an errand that might severely mortify their pride, or shock their feelings. Yet whatever might be the secret reluctance of Rosella to become gentlewoman-usher in second to Mr. Pet, she did not think proper to hesitate when Miss Beauclerc declared herself ready to begin the expedition; but merely reminded her that neither Simpson nor themselves

were

were acquainted with the road they were to take, and aſked if he ſhould not obtain particular directions upon the ſubject: for her friend had previouſly announced that ſhe meant to walk.

"I will myſelf enquire," replied Miſs Beauclerc, "for it is not my intention to take Simpſon; as it muſt be the height of cruelty to expoſe the agonizing feelings we may too poſſibly be witneſs to, to the obſervation of a ſervant; and indeed," continued the lady with great ſolemnity, "ſuch an indiſcretion might betray the moſt important ſecrets to public curioſity."

Roſella was thunderſtruck: walking in the duſk of the evening without an attendant, unacquainted with the way they were to purſue, and what was ſtill worſe, returning after night-fall, which muſt be the caſe, wholly unprotected, was a thing ſhe could not have had an idea of, but from the fearleſs rambles of thoſe gentle creatures, whoſe marches and counter-marches ſhe had peruſed in Miſs Beauclerc's library books; but then ſhe fancied that the roads, the lanes, and the woods ſhe read of, muſt univerſally have been appropriated to intereſting adventures, or that the beautiful creatures who majeſtically paced through them, "all alone by the light of the moon," muſt have inevitably worn ſome diſtinguiſhing mark of ſublimity which exempted them from the vulgar attacks of common accidents; * like that honeſt gentleman of ſolemn memory, who ſo obligingly walked this earth eight or nine hundred years (looking quite freſh and young) with a croſs of fire imprinted upon his forehead, under a cilician bandeau, to awe ghoſts, goblins, and devils from impertinent approaches.

* Vide a late moſt brilliant publication of a Britiſh legiſlator.

Miſs

Miſs Beauclerc, who did not obſerve the conſternation of her young companion, put on her cloak with infinite compoſure; and deſiring Roſella to follow her example, called down Mr. Pet from the chair on which he had extended himſelf, and walked into the inn-yard, where from a ſide window ſhe had obſerved the landlord talking to a ſervant in a grey frock with a black collar, who rode away before ſhe reached them. Having made known her wiſh to be particularly informed of the road to Eideva Lodge, ſhe waited two or three ſeconds for an anſwer; the landlord, as before, ſurveying her very earneſtly.

"If I had known only a minute ago, Madam," ſaid he, "that you had buſineſs with Mr. Mompeſſon, you could have ſpoken to his ſervant, that young man who was with me juſt now; but I can ſend after him if you chooſe."

"No," replied Miſs Beauclerc with a dignified air, "what I have to relate is only for the ear of Mr. Mompreſſon himſelf."

"The poor gentleman is very ill, Ma'am; I hope you have not any bad news for him," ſaid mine hoſt with a look of doubt and reluctance: "it's very late, Ma'am—I believe it is nearer three miles than two from here to the Lodge—I queſtion if the poor gentleman be well enough to ſee you, Ma'am?"

"I hope," returned ſhe, "he will think my errand a welcome one; perhaps I can give him information that will not diſpleaſe him!"

"That indeed, Madam," ſaid the landlord, "is quite and clean another thing, and I don't think, poor gentleman, you can tell him any good news too ſoon; ſo, if you pleaſe, I will attend you."

"You

" You are very obliging," replied Miſs Beauclerc, " but I have reaſons for not chooſing to be accompanied by any perſon but this young lady."

" That young lady !" repeated he, turning his enquiring eyes upon Roſella.

" And I will thank you," reſumed Miſs Beauclerc, " to inſtruct me which road I am to take, for it becomes late."

" Yes, Ma'am, it is too late for two ladies to walk ſo far all lonely by themſelves—however you muſt do as you ſee fitting ; though I muſt ſay there is not a man for ten miles round that wiſhes that there family better than I do ; and I will make bold to adviſe you, Ma'am, to let me ſhew you the way."

" I am obliged to decline your propoſal," ſaid ſhe, half offended at an obſtinacy that ſo much incommoded her plan.

" Well, I ſay no more—I only hope you carry the poor gentleman good news. I have been his tenant thirty years, and he never once aſked for his rent harſhly, though God knows I have had my troubles, and havn't always been ſo able to pay it as I am now ; but he is a worthy gentleman, and would not diſtreſs the father of a family, God help him ! He will be rewarded in the next world, for he's not long for this—he's broken-hearted, Ma'am ! But come, I'll juſt ſhew you into the green lane that leads to his houſe, for if you have good news, you can't go too ſoon !"

A thouſand conjectures danced ſucceſſively into Miſs Beauclerc's brain at theſe hints, and ſhe eagerly followed him into the Durham road, where he led the way at a briſk pace. Roſella attended with almoſt equal alacrity ; for her compaſſion and never-failing wiſh of carrying

consolation to the afflicted, which she imagined it would be possible to afford, by giving the worthy poor gentleman a clue to discover Mr. Pet's master, who she concluded, from the landlord's expressions, might very possibly be a run-away son, made her forget her recent reflections, until their conductor having led them about a mile and a half on the high road, turned into a narrow lane, rendered very dark by tall trees which overhung the hedges on either side.

"Have we yet far to go?" asked Rosella.

"About a mile, Miss," returned the landlord; "I think I had better walk on till you get into Mr. Mompesson's grounds."

"I have not the least fear," said Miss Beauclerc, hastily; "have the goodness to direct us, and we will now pursue our walk without you."

"Well, you must do as you please, to be sure—so, Ma'am, you must go right straight on an end till you get to a little bit of a pond, then please to turn to your left, and go clean across the field, and on th'other side on't you will find a six-barred swing gate, and that takes you through the Squire's shrubbery, and then when you get on to the lawn, you see the house afore your eyes."

The landlord then required instructions concerning the supper, and having received them, trudged off whistling a psalm melody.

Miss Beauclerc and Rosella continued their way through the dark lane, and Pet, now their only escort, led the van with so quick a march, that it was evident he was well acquainted with the road they were travelling. Miss Beauclerc remarked the circumstance to her companion, who had been trembling with affright from the moment the landlord had left them; whilst her

heroic friend, on the contrary, felt her courage rise in proportion as the shades of night deepened round them.

"I am alarmed lest Pet should run away from us," exclaimed Rosella, advancing a few steps to allure him back; but the animal for the first time disregarded her voice, and in two minutes they wholly lost sight of him. "How unfortunate!" she continued; "had we not better return to Sedgfield, and send somebody to look for him?"

"No, my dear," said Miss Beauclerc very calmly; "it is most probable that the dog will go on to the Lodge, which he appears so well to know; and as he cannot account for his appearance, or inform the friends of his unhappy master where they may trace his wandering steps, we ought to follow him, and elucidate the mystery."

Rosella had no objection to the proposition, but she wished to elucidate the mystery in a less heroic manner—that is, she would have made her persent peregrination at a more convenient hour, when the sun might have illumined her on the way:—in the present instance, unluckily, the pale moon was only a day old; and instead of exerting her mild radiance in behalf of the fair travellers, she very carelessly left the hemisphere in total darkness, in contradiction to the particular and unvaried assistance she always lends during her whole revolution, to gentle and beautiful nocturnal adventurers. Rosella, as she advanced in the lane, thought they should never arrive at the little bit of a pond which was to direct them out of it; and her fears increasing every moment, she crept close

close to her whimsical friend, and clung very amicably to the arm she held.

"Hark!" cried Miss Beauclerc suddenly, "surely that breeze brought a long and dreadful groan to my ear!"

Rosella listened, and the sound at that instant appeared to die away, but was almost immediately renewed with more violence.

"Merciful Heaven!" exclaimed Miss Beauclerc, clasping her hands in an attitude of sublime distress, "direct our steps to the poor sufferer!"

Rosella was in an agony.

Perhaps," resumed her companion, "it is the unhappy stranger himself!"

Rosella listened yet more earnestly, and at length discovered that the poor sufferer was the good landlord, who had ceased whistling to end his tune vocally; and as he had been in his youth a singer at a village Church, he bellowed out his minims and semibreves with so persevering a *tenuto*, that at a little distance, his tones borne upon the softening zephyr, might be mistaken without violating the judgment, for signals of distress.

Miss Beauclerc, on discovering her error, blushed with vexation; for she had prepared every tender feeling to come upon the stage with considerable eclat, and had momentarily reviewed all the admirable conduct of the most captivating damsels upon such emergencies. In the first place, she intended to fly to the succour of the groaning hero, and then call to his servant, if he had any, and with cool fortitude give the most wise and salutary directions—then brave every inconvenience to see them executed—then attend him with the care of the most

affectionate ſiſter,—and finally, on ſuſpecting the effect her charms and her expert nurſing could not fail to have upon the heart of the convaleſcent, ſhe was to vaniſh like a dream, as a repelling hint to his flame, and leave the poor youth to gallop in ſearch of her from Durham to Dover:—not that ſhe meant to execute all this herſelf—no; Roſella, her beloved Roſella was to be the loadſtone, the magnet, the attraction, the conſtellation; but ſhe was very ſenſible that with the beſt heart in the world, and the moſt compaſſionate and amiable temper that ever ſoftened at the diſtreſſes of others, Roſella ſtill required a very well-read and able guide to inſtruct her in the fervent ſympathies and melting pity that glow in the tender boſoms of heroines; ſo ſhe placed her in the back-ground till called for, and conſtructed all her allegories, *en attendant*, in the firſt perſon ſingular.

At length, after walking ſome time in the lane with a caution the obſcurity of the night demanded, they arrived at the pond the landlord had ſpoken of, but did not diſcover this long looked-for object till Miſs Beauclerc had walked two or three ſteps into it. She extricated herſelf by the aſſiſtance of Roſella, and they very gladly turned to the left to croſs the field, which in their imagination was a level paſture; but they found they had to mount a moſt fatiguing aſcent, and that their progreſs was often impeded by large pieces of rough ſtone that roſe out of the ſcanty turf the neighbouring flocks were doomed to nibble at. Roſella fell over one of thoſe, and in endeavoring to ſave her face from injury, ſeverely hurt one of her hands; but not to excite the

elegiac

elegiac complaints of her friend, ſhe concealed the miſchance, and went forward to ſeek the gate they were to paſs through. It was with conſiderable difficulty that ſhe found it; and holding it open for Miſs Beauclerc, her eyes very earneſtly explored the path they were to take.

"It is ſo dark," exclaimed ſhe, "that I cannot diſcern any track."

She ſtill continued to look for it, however, and diſcovered at length, within three paces of the place where ſhe ſtood, a very ſudden abyſs, that ſeemed yawning to receive her: and ſtopping her friend, who was walking fearleſsly on, ſhe ſhudderingly informed her of the danger they had eſcaped.

"Surely," cried Miſs Beauclerc, "this cannot be the ſhrubbery we were told of?"

Roſella thought it certainly was not; however they advanced ſlowly, in a path flanked on one ſide by an almoſt perpendicular mountain cloathed with foliage, and on the other, by a deſcent as ſudden, which preſented the tops of the trees that were thickly planted down the ſteep, juſt on a parallel with the road, and as the eye fell over them, waving in the night breeze, they reſembled the black billows of Cocytus.

The ladies, creeping for ſecurity cloſe to the mountain ſide, moving as ſlow as "foot could fall," arrived in rather more than half an hour at a ſecond gate, which being faſtened, they were obliged to climb over: and on the other ſide of it, they deſcried what they ſuppoſed to be the houſe of Mr. Mompeſſon, which appeared a tolerably ſpacious building; but no ſigns of domeſtic occurrences or ſocial feſtivity enlivened

enlivened it, for only one ſolitary window exhibited any token of its being inhabited, by emitting through a half-cloſed ſhutter a faint reflection of light.

CHAP. IV.

Inſanity and death.

ROSELLA was now completely diſpirited.

"What can this mean?" exclaimed Miſs Beauclerc: "it is impoſſible the whole family can have gone to reſt ſo early!"

It was with difficulty, and after a long ſearch, that a bell could be found; and in conſideration of the illneſs of Mr. Mompeſſon, united to a preſentiment which the ſad ſtillneſs that reigned round the houſe occaſioned, Miſs Beauclerc rung it with great moderation. No one attending the ſummons, ſhe applied to the bell once more, and after another interval, an old woman, with a light in her hand, unlocked the door, and peeped out.

"Oh Chriſt, defend me!" exclaimed ſhe, in a voice of horror, and drawing back with precipitation, ſhe threw the door in the face of Miſs Beauclerc, who at that moment, advanced before Roſella, to gain admittance.

"What myſtery hangs over us?" ejaculated ſhe to her terrified companion.—"How unaccountably ſtrange is all this!"

"Let

"Let us return," cried Roſella; "you can ſend here, or call yourſelf to-morrow morning."

"No," replied Miſs Beauclerc, with a ſublime air, "it may be that ſome important diſcovery will reſult from our perſeverance in deſiring to ſee Mr. Mompeſſon this evening."

A third time ſhe pulled the bell with a more authoritative peal, and in two minutes the ſervant ſhe had ſeen converſing with the landlord at Sedgfield, threw open a window in the firſt ſtory, and holding a candle as low as he could, that he might ſurvey the intruders, demanded what they wanted.

"I deſire to ſpeak to Mr. Mompeſſon," returned Miſs Beauclerc, "upon buſineſs of importance."

"Mr. Mompeſſon! my maſter!" exclaimed the domeſtic.—"Do you mean old Mr. Mompeſſon?"

"Yes," returned the lady, after a pauſe of conſideration whether, as there was a younger perſonage, it would not be more deſirable to ſpeak to him.

"Good God! my poor maſter died a little after noon to-day!"

Miſs Beauclerc now began to repent her letter-writing moſt bitterly:—"Unfortunate!" cried ſhe; "perhaps my intelligence might have lengthened his days!"

"What, is my young maſter ſafe in France?" aſked the man eagerly.

It now occurred to Roſella and Miſs Beauclerc at the ſame moment, that the unhappy mountaineer was aſſuredly the ſon of Mr. Mompeſſon.

"How

" How will he be ſhocked to hear of his father's death !" thought Roſella : " poor young man—I hope, for his ſake, that his conduct has not haſtened it !"

Miſs Beauclerc demanded of the ſervant what part of the family was now in the houſe ; and learned that it contained only the body of his maſter, the old woman they had ſeen, and himſelf : the man adding in the moſt mournful tone, " Perhaps, Ma'am, you want to ſpeak with the young ladies ? They are both out of their mind, and not here. But if you can give me any news of Mr. George, I will come down and open the door ; for I expect every hour the arrival of a gentleman my poor maſter ſent me to fetch juſt before he was taken ſpeechleſs ; and this gentleman would give a thouſand pounds to know what is become of Mr. George ; for we are all afraid—but I will come down directly."

This promiſe was ſoon executed ; but as Roſella paſſed the man to enter the houſe, he gazed earneſtly at her, and turned pale.

" My mind miſgives me," cried he, " that this blood is Mr. George Mompeſſon's."

" What does he mean ?" ſaid Miſs Beauclerc : but the words had not paſſed her lips, before ſhe diſcovered that the muſlin cloak Roſella wore was almoſt dyed with blood.—

" Oh my God !" added ſhe, " my child is killed !"

Roſella was terrified at her own appearance ; but almoſt inſtantly recollecting that it was occaſioned by her wounded hand, ſhe re-aſſured both her friend and the ſervant by explaining the diſaſter.

Miſs

Miſs Beauclerc debated with herſelf whether ſhe ſhould entruſt the domeſtic with the ſecret of young Mompeſſon's late retreat; but reflecting, in ſpite of the principles of heroiſm, which allow the confiding of life and fame to the diſcretion of ſtrangers, that ſuch a communication might lead to a diſcovery of the unhappy youth, which the queſtion "if he were ſafe in France?" gave her to underſtand muſt be fatal to him, ſhe ſo far governed her ſympathetic overflowings, as to preſerve them for the ear of the gentleman who was momentarily expected; and informing the man where ſhe was to be found, deſired him to ſend his maſter's friend to Sedgfield, where ſhe ſhould remain the whole of the next day, if he were anxious to hear the intelligence ſhe could give him.

The ſervant appeared diſappointed, but acquieſced in her deciſion: and when he learned that the ladies were wholly unaccompanied, he lamented that he could not attend them back, becauſe he was obliged to await the coming of the gentleman, and could not, beſides, leave his poor maſter's remains.

"I am far from wiſhing it," ſaid Miſs Beauclerc; "but I ſhall be indebted to you if you will furniſh me with a light."

"Moſt willingly, Ma'am; and I am ſorry I can do nothing more to ſerve you: the old woman is getting a bed ready for Mr. Delxmere, who will ſleep here, I ſuppoſe; and beſides, ſhe is ſo decrepid, that ſhe could not be of much uſe to you."

"A light is all the aſſiſtance I either expect or deſire," returned Miſs Beauclerc.

"I will get it in a moment, Madam," said the man, withdrawing for that purpose.

He had left his candle with them, which Rosella took up, to examine some portraits hanging over the chimney-piece of a sort of breakfast room, into which the servant had led them from the hall they had entered at. A pair of these represented two very lovely young women; and between the frames hung another, with the glazed side turned to the wainscot: upon the back, which alone was exposed to view, were pasted four hearts cut in black crape, each one torn in two.

"What can this be?" said Rosella, after having examined this strange object.

Miss Beauclerc took the frame from the hook, and turning the glazed side to the light, beheld a most animated and correct resemblance of the mysterious stranger.

"It is himself!" exclaimed Rosella; "but more handsome."

"Yes, Madam," said the domestic, who returned whilst she spoke, "it is him indeed; but not more handsome than he was, when he was reckoned the best son, the best brother, and the best master in the whole country, and when he was indeed the best young gentleman I ever came anigh."

Miss Beauclerc could no longer restrain her eager curiosity:—"Has he done aught," asked she, "to forfeit so excellent a character?"

The man looked at her in surprise, and for a few moments, made no reply. At length—"I thought," cried he, "you had known—or else, God knows, it does not become me——"

"Say no more," interrupted Miss Beauclerc, who began to fear that the dignity of her character

character would be ſullied, by extorting ſo important a ſecret from a poor fellow, who wiſhed to withhold it from the fidelity of his attachment to the family he ſerved.

" Indeed, Ma'am," reſumed he, " Mr. George was more unfortunate than—than any thing elſe."

" I always thought ſo," returned ſhe, pleaſed to have her mountain hero raiſed again in her eſtimation; for ſhe had begun to fear ſhe had intereſted herſelf and her Roſella in the fate of a degenerate wretch, who had committed ſome vulgar ſort of Old Bailey offence, and inſtead of ſinking under the weight of a delicate woe, was flying from a cell in Newgate, and death, death, death—lying perdue in a Judge's wig.

" But pray," ſaid Roſella eagerly, " can you tell me what this means on the back of his picture?"

" That, Madam," replied the domeſtic, whilſt the tears ſtarted to his eyes, " was done by one of the young ladies before ſhe was removed: from the time the bad news reached us, ſhe was always talking about deſpair and the grave, and ſinging ſuch diſmal ſongs ſo wildly—my poor miſtreſs had fallen down in a fit, and never got up alive; and the eldeſt of the ladies cut up her mourning cloaths to make ſuch fancies as theſe whenever they came into her head. She ſaid Mr. George had broke all their hearts, and one of them was her papa's, and one her poor mama's, another was her ſiſter's, and the large one was her own heart, for her's, ſhe ſaid, was ſwelled to burſting. The other young lady never ſpoke, or cried one ſingle drop—but Oh! Ma'am, they were

obliged

obliged to be taken to the doctor's house, for they grew very bad, and my master took to his bed!"

The poor fellow could say no more; and Rosella, whose tears flowed at the broken recital, sobbed aloud. Miss Beauclerc was much and undesignedly affected: she recollected, however, that her companion and herself had nearly three miles of very indifferent road to repass before they could repose for the night; and after having roused her mind from the momentary forgetfulness which genuine sensibility had occasioned, she relapsed into the sublimity of heroism, and taking the lanthorn from the servant with an air of repressed emotion, she repeated her message to the expected gentlman, and led the way to the hall door.

Rosella followed her, after having again hung up the portrait of their unhappy acquaintance as she had found it, from respect to the fanciful yet striking allusion made by his still more unfortunate sister.

The man gazed at them some time after they had left the house, as if he really was what he professed to be, anxious for their safe return: and it was only when they had nearly reached the first gate in what the landlord called the shrubbery, that they ceased to behold the light of his candle; for he had followed them a considerable way from the door.

"The night is surely unusually dark," said Miss Beauclerc, giving her lanthorn to her companion, whilst she climbed the gate.

Rosella's whole soul was occupied by the disjointed tale she had just heard, and she merely returned an assenting monosyllable to the observation. Their light burned so dimly, that it

was

was with great difficulty they could explore their way so as to escape the precipice which skirted the path as far as the second gate. Rosella walked first, holding the lanthron to the ground, and Miss Beauclerc followed her closely, entreating that she would be careful of herself. They had proceeded thus some time, when a rustling in the trees terrified them both: Miss Beauclerc started, and directed her eyes to the place from whence the noise issued; at the same moment she heard a crash, and both Rosella and the light vanished. Every calamity their situation could admit of, assailed the imagination of her alarmed friend, who screamed her name in all the energy of despair.

"I am safe, dear Madam, I am safe," cried Rosella; "but in falling I have extinguished the light: what shall we do?"

"Oh, thank God you are not killed," exclaimed Miss Beauclerc; "I care not for any other disaster—give me your arm."

Rosella obeyed, and they crept to the swing gate, where, as they stood a moment, they were joined by the run-away Pet, who announced himself by licking the hand of Rosella, who was pleased to have recovered him, and concluded, that not being able to get in at the Lodge, he had wandered back in search of his deserted companions: she caressed him with kindness, and he followed her very patiently.

They were more than half an hour crossing the field, and to their infinite satisfaction, at length discovered the pond at the entrance of the lane, by a faint light which the water reflected.

"We have now only level ground to traverse," said Miss Beauclerc, in a tone expressive of pleasure—a sensation in which Rosella joined, for

for ſhe had begun to feel inconvenience from her accident. Yet their terrors were not at an end: they had ſcarcely walked an hundred paces ere the rattling of a carriage gave a new alarm; for the darkneſs of the night rather increaſed than diminiſhed, and they ran a conſiderable riſk of being cruſhed under the wheels, from the narrowneſs of the lane.

Miſs Beauclerc called out, but in vain: the poſt-chaiſe, for ſuch it appeared to be, approached very rapidly, and Roſella then joined her voice to that of her friend, to deprecate the miſchief ſhe apprehended. Their united ſcreams at length reached the driver, and arreſted his ſpeed; and at the ſame inſtant the chaiſe window was let down, and the voice of a man demanded the reaſon of the outcry. The poſtillion ſwore a tremendous oath, and levelled at the trembling Roſella and her indignant companion thoſe delicate epithets commonly uſed to the moſt unfortunate of their ſex.

"What the devil is the matter?" again demanded the voice from the carriage.

"Why, your Honor," replied the driver, "it's only a couple of——"

"How dare you," cried Miſs Beauclerc, all the dignity of heroic virtue up in arms—— "how dare you inſult people of honor and decency with ſuch vile language?"

"*Deſſent*, quotha," retorted the driver; "yes, you muſt be deſſent ſort of folks, to be ſure, to be a ſtroaming at this toime o'night in hedges and ditches, and up ſitch leanes as this!"

The perſon in the carriage ſilenced him with a tone of authority; then addreſſing the complainants,

plainants, " Good women," said he " are you hurt ?"

" Good women !" retorted Miss Beauclerc aloud.—" Good women !" repeated she to herself, " great Heaven ! was ever beautiful young heroine before included in such a term !"

" My head is giddy," said Rosella in a faint voice ; " I am very sick !"

The postillion was proceeding without further ceremony, but the gentleman called to him to stop :—" Are you in distress ?" asked he.

" My poor Rosella !" exclaimed Miss Beauclerc; " what will become of us !"

" Which way are you travelling ?" resumed the voice.

At this moment a light appeared in that part of the lane adjoining the road.

" I hope," cried Miss Beauclerc, not condescending to attend to the questions she heard, " this is my servant come in search of us."

" Your servant !" repeated the gentleman; " good God ! how could this happen !"

He then jumped from the carriage, and approaching the offended fair one, asked if she had not been at Eideva Lodge about an hour back : on hearing the reply, he entreated forgiveness for the error he had been in, and begged the ladies would use the chaise in their return to Sedgfield. Rosella, recollecting the disfigured state in which her wounded hand had put her, hastily refused the proffered civility.

" No, no, my dear Miss Beauclerc," said she, " let us walk."

The appearance of Simpson, who carried the light they had seen, was in favor of the request ;

requeſt; but the maſter of the carriage ſtrenuouſly oppoſed it.

The poor old butler inſtantly diſcovered the diſcolored ſtate of her garments, and uttering an exclamation of horror, reſpectfully blamed his Lady for not requiring his attendance. "Has Miſs Roſella been run over?" added he.

"No, I hope not," ſaid the gentleman haſtily; "but the young lady ſhould be immediately carried to Sedgfield, that ſhe may be taken proper care of."

Miſs Beauclerc aſſented to the propoſition; and Roſella no longer oppoſing it from fatigue and weakneſs, the gentleman placed her in the chaiſe, where her heroic friend followed her, inviting the maſter of it to take his ſeat by her ſide. During their ſhort ride, he told Miſs Beauclerc that he was the perſon expected by the ſervant they had ſeen at the Lodge, who was, by a concurrence of melancholy circumſtances, the only remaining domoſtic of a once numerous and happy houſehold. "I underſtand from him, Madam," continued the gentleman, "that chance has made you acquainted with a very unfortunate young man, whom I once called——whom I muſt ſtill call my friend, in ſpite of his errors, and the miſery they have produced."

"I know not," returned Miſs Beauclerc, "what thoſe errors are: their effects are dreadful indeed! But I found it impoſſible to refuſe my compaſſion to the deſolate ſituation of this wretched youth, which became known to me in a ſingular manner."

She then related the circumſtances attending her firſt and ſecond interview with Mompeſſon, to which his friend liſtened with intereſt and attention;

attention; but before her narration had arrived at the period in which Roſella was driven to the forlorn hut he inhabited, the chaiſe ſtopped in the inn yard, to the mortification of her auditor, whoſe anxiety was much heightened to learn the ſequel of the tale. Roſella failed not on alighting, to enquire for poor Pet, and had the ſatisfaction to hear that he had followed the carriage. She then withdrew to her chamber, accompanied by Miſs Beauclerc, who finding that her ailments were not very ſerious, permitted her, after having changed her dreſs, to deſcend to the ſupper table.

The gentleman, who had announced himſelf as Mr. Delamere, had ſent to deſire the honor of taking his meal with the ladies, which Miſs Beauclerc conſented to after a little deliberation. As her companion and herſelf entered the eating-room appropriated to them, they found him already there, and he inſtantly congratulated Roſella upon her preſent ſafety, with a compliment equally addreſſed to her friend, upon their generoſity in having riſked it from motives of genuine compaſſion and charity.

As Simpſon entered with the ſupper apparatus, Pet ſeized the opportunity of making his appearance likewiſe. "Good God!" exclaimed Mr. Delamere, "from whence came this animal?"

"It was yeſterday morning entruſted to my care," replied Miſs Beauclerc, "with a requeſt to have him conveyed to the Lodge."

"So lately!" ejaculated he: and Simpſon then quitting the room, he continued—"Poor Mompeſſon had been traced to York, and both his cloaths and his dog particularly deſcribed by various advertiſements, offering a conſiderable

conſiderable reward for further intelligence of his route. This little animal belonged to his favorite ſiſter; and I ſuppoſe he was unwilling to part with him but upon the moſt urgent neceſſity."

Roſella, as well as her friend, inſtantly conjectured that this advertiſement had met the eye of the wanderer when ſhe had preſented him the papers at his forlorn retreat: but no further converſation could now take place, from the attendance upon the ſupper table. When the ſervants had withdrawn, Mr. Delamere eagerly requeſted all the information of his unhappy friend the ladies could give; as he ſaid he wiſhed to convey ſome money to him, without which he feared, by his lingering ſo near the habitation of his father, he could not quit the kingdom.

Miſs Beauclerc complied with the entreaty, not forgetting to paint the ſhare Roſella had taken in the adventure of the ſtorm, in a point of view the moſt favorable to her fortitude, her ſenſibility, and diſcretion. Mr. Delamere uttered ſome animated expreſſions of admiration upon the excellence of her heart; but Roſella, conſcious of the unwillingneſs with which ſhe had undertaken the miſſion ſo much extolled, declined his encomiums, and directed them to her friend.

Miſs Beauclerc, in mentioning the embaſſy of which Pet was the object, deſcribed, at the requeſt of Mr. Delamere, the perſon of the peaſant who was charged with it.—"I muſt hope," ſaid he, "that I may reſcue this moſt unfortunate young man from further diſgrace and puniſhment: what he has already endured

is, I am convinced, ſufficient to expiate his offence."

The queſtion which had the whole evening been hovering on the lips of Miſs Beauclerc, could no longer be reſtrained—what the nature of that offence was which had thus carried ſo horrible a deſolation into the boſom of the family.

"The error of George Mompeſſon," ſaid Mr. Delamere gravely, "without the mitigation of many extenuating circumſtances, might juſtly be denominated a crime. You have not at this moment ſufficient time to hear all that I wiſh to relate in palliation, and I cannot endure that in your opinion he ſhould ſink to a point too abject, let me entreat then, that you will forbear all enquiry for the preſent; and ſhould you by accident become acquainted with the fatal ſtigma attending a name once reſpected and revered, let me conjure you to review his ſingle lapſe with all the indulgence your compaſſion and generoſity may ſuggeſt."

He then roſe, ſaying he ſhould inſtantly ſet out for Stanmore Hills, and begin his ſearch, as he was ſenſible no time was to be loſt.—He added, that on his return to Eideva Lodge, he ſhould call at Sedgfield, in the flattering hope of again acknowledging the obligation he had received, in the perſon of his unhappy friend, and of being enable to inform the ladies that their active humanity had been effectual.

When Miſs Beauclerc and Roſella retired for the night, inſtead of taking the repoſe they ſo much required, they could not forbear ſpending ſome time in forming conjectures upon the wide-ſpreading errors of young Mompeſſon, and deprecating his immediate knowledge of their tragical

tragical effects. They juſtly concluded that the people of the houſe could in a moment ſolve their doubts, becauſe the landlord had appeared ſo well acquainted with the diſtreſs at the Lodge; but Miſs Beauclerc from heroic motives, and Roſella from genuine delicacy, and in compliance with the requeſt of Mr. Delamere, would each ſooner have endured her ſuſpenſe for weeks, than have queſtioned any part of the family upon ſo tender a ſubject.

It was late the next morning when they roſe; and after breakfaſt, as Miſs Beauclerc had not yet had an opportunity of writing what ſhe conceived to be the moſt intereſting part of her journal, ſhe determined to employ the reſt of the morning to that purpoſe.—Roſella remained alone in the eating-room, which was rather detached from the houſe, and very quiet; and having fallen into a reverie when her friend left her, ſhe had not been rouſed from it by any external object for above an hour. During that time her ideas had merely reverted from the miſeries at the Lodge, to the unfortunate author of thoſe miſeries, and from him to the generous young man who was ſo anxious to ſoften the misfortunes of this diſtracted family, who boldly avowed himſelf attached by affection to a being plunged into diſgrace and abject poverty, and who appeared eager to bring to notice the habitual good qualities of his fallen friend, that the dark ſpot which tarniſhed them might be the leſs obſerved. Little as ſhe had ſeen of the world, this conduct was, ſhe thought, by no means common, and ſhe remembered with regret, how ſmall had been her merit in acting the part that had procured her ſo many eulogiums. She conceived a higher idea of the judgment

judgment of Miſs Beauclerc, from the opinions ſhe had romantically hazarded concerning the *myſterious ſtranger*, and from her ſolicitude to aſſiſt him, than any ſhe had formed ſince they had quitted Mr. Mordaunt, whoſe parting words had made a conſiderable impreſſion upon her mind, and infuſed a kind of ſuſpicion into it, which though Roſella regarded as treaſonable to gratitude and friendſhip, ſhe could not wholly diſcard.

She was muſing ſtill with great earneſtneſs, when two gentle taps at the door recalled her attention; it opened, and Mr. Delamere appeared. Roſella ſtarted up—"I hope you bring good news?" cried ſhe haſtily.

"I thank you a thouſand times for your ſolicitude," returned he.—"Yes, I bring better news than I had dared to hope."

"You have ſeen him?" aſked Roſella.

"I have ſeen him: having parted with his dog, he changed his cloaths at Reeth, and had the imprudence to return to the very ſpot where you met with him. So that I ſoon diſcovered his retreat; for I was almoſt unaccountably carried to the place, from an idea that he would not be far from it."

"But is he now removed?" interrupted Roſella.

"He is," replied Mr. Delamere: "I truſt that he has, by this time, almoſt reached the ſea-port we fixed upon whilſt I remained with him; and if he gets out of the kingdom, all will be well."

"All will be well!" repeated ſhe, the ſcene at the Lodge ſtill dwelling upon her mind.

"Very partially, and in a moſt limited ſenſe, I muſt mean," replied Delamere:—"believe me

me, he is much to be pitied even where he is moſt to be condemned. If you could know," added he, " what he has ſuffered, and ſtill ſuffers, you would greatly compaſſionate him: he ſpeaks with energetic gratitude of the generous attentions of your friend, and pays an ampler tribute of admiration and reverence to the gentle being that appeared to him in the fury of the ſtorm, and placed before his eyes the abyſs into which he was falling. Your friend, in his preſence, called you Roſella: he remembers the name, but his ear did not catch any other."

Roſella, underſtanding this as an indirect application, replied that ſhe was called Montreſor: Mr. Delamere bowed.—" Miſs Beauclerc," added ſhe, " will be happy to hear of your return, and the ſucceſs that has attended you: I will inform her that you are here."

She then withdrew, and ran to perform her commiſſion.

It ſo happened, that the good lady had at this moment brought her narrative unwarily to a point, where it was eſſential that ſhe ſhould introduce the *faux pas* of her mountain hero, and ſhe very readily complied with the ſummons of Roſella.

Mr. Delamere repeated to her the ſubſtance of what he had related to her young companion, and Miſs Beauclerc thanked him for the information.

" I claim your preſence at our dinner table," added ſhe; " and until we adjourn to it, the time ſhall be given to an uninterrupted detail of the unfortunate hiſtory of your friend, young Mompeſſon: I feel well diſpoſed to liſten to it with all the indulgence you have predemanded, and I beg leave to obſerve to you, that Roſella, and

and myself have avoided any enquiry into the origin of those distresses represented to us at the Lodge, that we might hear it with every favorable circumstance it will admit of."

"I told you," replied he, "that many palliatives were attached to his misconduct, and certainly the fact is so: but I must yet entreat your patience, and the generous forbearance you have hitherto used, in not seeking to know, by common report, what must much excite your curiosity. The family at the Lodge are too much pitied and respected to allow me any fear that the cause of their wretchedness should be obtruded upon you without any apparent solicitude on your part: and—I think will tell you that Mompesson himself conjured me not to reveal his disgrace to you, until I could reasonably conclude, from the lapse of time, that he had left the kingdom; for he protested he would never survive the simple possibility of encountering you or your young friend, in the positive character, to use his own words, which are undeservedly harsh, of a villain."

The eager wishes of Miss Beauclerc and Rosella to learn this secret, the disclosure of which was so long delayed, were now almost beyond controul; but stimulated by the encomiums of Delamere to merit still further praise, they acquiesced with his proposal.—He expressed his acknowledgments for the dinner invitation, which was a pleasure he was obliged, he said, to deny himself, because he wished to insure, by his personal attendance, every proper respect to the remains of the elder Mr. Mompesson: but if Miss Beauclerc would allow him to take his tea with her, he should think himself honored. And on the following morning, if she remained

so

ſo long at Sedgfield, he would expoſe to her the horrible depravity of a faſhionable and titled Circe, who was the primary cauſe of the calamities which had ſo much excited her compaſſion and intereſt.

She readily agreed to the propoſition, ſaying ſhe was merely travelling for the improvement of her health and ſpirits, both of which had lately received a ſhock by ſevere loſſes; and it was therefore indifferent to her whether ſhe remained a day or a week in any place where ſhe could be tolerably well accommodated.

Mr. Delamere then withdrew; and Roſella, the next minute, beheld him on horſe-back, galloping in the road that led to the Lodge.

When Simpſon entered to lay the cloth, Roſella remarked that he appeared indiſpoſed, and kindly enquired if he felt unwell; he ſhook his head, and as Miſs Beauclerc was not in the room, ſaid, with ſome ſymptoms of ill-humour, that his Lady's fancies would ſoon kill him, for he had not been uſed to ſuch a vagary life, and was too old to take to it now. Roſella, who had from infancy received from the old man many marks of kindneſs and regard, was grieved that he ſhould have real occaſion for complaint, and deſiring him to deſiſt from what he was doing, and leave the care of the table to the people of the houſe, begged him to repoſe himſelf, and ſhe would inform Miſs Beauclerc of his indiſpoſition.

"No, Miſs Montreſor," ſaid Simpſon, "I "can't do that: who is there here to lay a cloth, or put a dinner upon table as it ſhould be? if I was to leave it to thoſe folks, it would not be fit to ſit down to."

Roſella

Roſella was well acquainted with the obſtinacy of the old man, and ran to her friend to urge her interference. But Miſs Beauclerc interpoſed in vain; Simpſon would not hear of ſeceding from his office, and after many arguments and entreaties, Roſella was obliged to give up the point.

It was late in the evening when Mr. Delamere returned: he told them he had arranged affairs at the Lodge, where he had procured the preſence of a relation of the family, as he could not conſult young Mompeſſon, who knew not as yet the tragical events which had taken place there, and was perſuaded the total ſilence, and ſeeming deſertion of his natural friends, were the effects of a juſt anger, and an intimation that they wiſhed to caſt him off.

"And did you not even hint at any part of what had happened?" ſaid Miſs Beauclerc.

"Had I done ſo," returned Delamere, "he would perhaps have ſurmiſed the reſt, and have become careleſs of his fate: and though I know his exiſtence is a burthen to him, I think the future feelings of his amiable and unfortunate ſiſters, ſhould they ever recover to a knowledge of the termination of this unhappy affair, ought to be as much attended to as poſſible.

After this little diſcuſſion, the converſation became leſs gloomy: Delamere diſplayed himſelf to great advantage on the different topics that aroſe, and Miſs Beauclerc might poſſibly have fixed upon ſo pleaſing a young man as the ſucceſsful lover of her Roſella, had not that important perſonage, in her drama, been already immutably decided upon between herſelf and Mrs. Ellinger.

CHAP. XVI.

The fascination of a high-born beauty analyzed.

MR. DELAMERE was to breakfast with the ladies by appointment; and as Miss Beauclerc had no objection to his falling very desperately in love with Rosella, though she did not mean that his sighs should be returned, she suffered her to descend to the sitting-room some time before she chose to be ready, to allow of an interesting *tête-à-tête*.

The gentleman was waiting their levee when Rosella entered it, but the effect of the *rencontre* was not so interesting as Miss Beauclerc might have expected: indeed it is not to be ascertained what declarations of eternal passion might have escaped the lips of Mr. Delamere, had not poor Simpson, busy as usual, entered the apartment immediately after Rosella, whose attention then reverted almost wholly to him.

"How are you?" demanded she, with a look of unaffected solicitude: "you appear quite ill —why do you fatigue yourself with the breakfast—pray go and lie down, and Miss Beauclerc will send, I am sure, for assistance."

Simpson looked very melancholy, but made no answer; and having finished what he had undertaken, notwithstanding her remonstrances, he withdrew without replying to them. Rosella was much distressed; and Mr. Delamere perceiving it, observed that as Miss Beauclerc had no other servant with her, he hoped she would accept

accept the attendance of his valet during the indiſpoſition of the old man.

"You are very good," replied Roſella: "perhaps Simpſon might be then induced to ſpare himſelf; I will run and inform Miſs Beauclerc of his increaſing illneſs."

She was haſtening to execute this intention, but was prevented leaving the room by the entrance of her friend, who on hearing the report, very peremptorily inſiſted that Simpſon ſhould retire to his bed, and ordered him proper attendance: and the old butler, overcome by pain and wearineſs, ſubmitted to her deciſion.

The breakfaſt was rather hurried by Miſs Beauclerc, whoſe impatience to hear the promiſed narrative was become rather troubleſome; but Mr. Delamere was by no means equally anxious to relate it: to him the taſk was painful, and Miſs Beauclerc was obliged to remind him, of his promiſe before he thought of executing it.

"It is a melancholy hiſtory you require of me," ſaid he; "a hiſtory in which you will find artifice and inſidious vice triumphant over ingenuouſneſs, and the firmneſs of habitual and tried integrity. I will give it you without preface, but I muſt again entreat that your judgment of my unhappy friend may lean to mercy."

Miſs Beauclerc bowed, whilſt Roſella, all attention to the expected tale, looked eagerly in the face of Delamere, but ſpoke not.

"Young Mompeſſon," reſumed he, "is the only ſon of thoſe unhappy parents, who could not ſurvive his errors and diſgrace; and his two ſiſters, ſtill more unfortunate, compoſed the whole of a family, united equally by the gentleſt bonds of affection as by the ties of con-

ſanguinity. George received the moſt liberal education—we met at a public ſchool, and were both gratified by being accidentally entered at the ſame Univerſity.—After he had quitted it, he returned home, where he remained rather more than a year, but not in idleneſs: for his father was a man of genius and learning, and was anxious to improve both the natural and acquired talents of his ſon. From this period, the impetuoſity of character which was ſufficiently diſtinguiſhable in young Mompeſſon, could no longer be reſtrained to partial inactivity; he wiſhed to enter upon ſome mode of life which would enable him to improve the moderate patrimony he was born to inherit, and give him at once wealth and celebrity. The bar appeared to be his election, and his father did not oppoſe his choice; becauſe poor Mompeſſon was formed to ſurpaſs moſt men in a ſituation which calls at once for ſound judgment and a brilliant imagination: many circumſtances however, occurred to cruſh the project, and he became a partner in a houſe of extenſive intereſt and univerſal concern. There, his promptitude, his integrity, his exactneſs, his judgment, and various abilities were equally perceptible and equally relied upon: he was the favorite of his ſeniors, the idol of his dependants.

"Thus far his career was deſervedly ſucceſsful: the income he now poſſeſſed, enabled him to mix with the gay world of faſhion and folly, and there it enſured him a welcome reception. Amongſt the moſt diſtinguiſhed of his aſſociates for birth and rank, he was perhaps admitted and careſſed, becauſe it was known that he could command very conſiderable ſums of money: with the more virtuous and diſintereſted however, his preſence

preſence was courted, from the unaffected elegance of his manners, the ſweetneſs of his diſpoſition, and the charm which his univerſal genius threw into the ſociety he frequented. Every man was then proud to acknowledge an intercourſe with Mompeſſon, and many women, of no inconſiderable fortune, ſighed to fix his attention. A female of a noble houſe—why ſhould I conceal her name, who has, with the moſt unbluſhing depravity, employed every perverted charm of intellect and perſon, ultimately to ruin, to diſtract, to annihilate an amiable family, for the ſhameleſs gratification of vanity, vice, and extravagance?—Oh Madam! whilſt my wretched friend wanders far from the ſociety he was accuſtomed to adorn, whilſt he bears—yet hardly bears his cruel diſgrace, as yet unconſcious of the dreadful calamities hanging over his crime, this woman hears unmoved the opprobrium ſhe forced upon him, and audaciouſly expreſſes her indignation that his atrocious inſolence ſhould have urged him to raiſe his eyes to her.—Why is ſhe not driven from the face of day, and loaded with the infamy ſhe merits? Becauſe her principles are not ſingular in the ſphere ſhe moves in, and becauſe the virtues or the merits of her anceſters have tranſmitted to her in the honors ſhe claims, a right to become degraded and vicious, without feeling the keenneſs of that ſtigma which the world affixes to the humbler offender. She is handſome, ſhe plays deep, ſhe bets, ſhe lures—ſhe is abhorred, deſpiſed, and tolerated; whilſt the reſpectable but unnoticed family of Mompeſſon ſilently receive the poiſon ſhe guided to their lips, and unable to blazon the extent of their wrongs to

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the world, ſink into the grave, or find a refuge in the annihilation of their reaſon.

"This woman—this unprincipled woman, ſaw my poor friend, and admired him: but to her his particular attentions were not directed, for he was unconſcious of, or indifferent to the ſentiments ſhe affected to diſplay—ſentiments the ſituation of the lady ſhould have taught her to repel. She was married; but ſeparated from her huſband, who allowed for her maintenance merely a pittance which the law extorted from him, for ſhe had been nearly portionleſs: with this, ſhe retired to the houſe of an amiable, but too facile friend of the firſt rank, whoſe huſband became the ſlave of her faſcinations; but when her rapacious demands upon his fortune could no longer be complied with, without injuring his legitimate children, he refuſed to ſatisfy them, and the harpy was compelled, by her habitual profuſion and natural depravity, to ſeek other dupes to her various wiles: yet ſtill ſhe retained, by unknown arts, the ſituation from which outraged hoſpitality, offended chaſtity, and inſulted dignity ſhould have driven her; and from this conſpicuous poſt, looked round for the victims ſhe meant to ſelect. George Mompeſſon met her eye; and his addreſs, his vivacity of temper, his youth, and circumſtances marked him for her prey. I will not offend your ear," continued Delamere, "with the detail of her Syren arts; Mompeſſon fatally yielded to them; and intoxicated with her favor, charmed with her beauty, her accompliſhments, her treacherous wit, her inſinuating maners, in which the ſeduction of the proſtitute is veiled by the exaltation of noble birth, and by the moſt well-acted ſweetneſs, gentleneſs, and ſenſibility, he ſupplied

plied her with all the money he could command, becauſe he was told that her diſtreſſes aroſe from the avarice of a brutal huſband, who often withheld the pittance aſſigned her. But her demands did not ſtop here: as her power over his mind increaſed, ſhe attempted to bend him to her purpoſes, by plunging him into the diſhonorable acts of abuſing the confidence his friends and aſſociates in buſineſs repoſed in him;—he reſiſted, but her tears and feigned agonies of diſtraction wrung his heart: ſhe talked of being dragged ignominiouſly to a jail, and he flew to his father for the aſſiſtance his principles forbade him to derive from baſeneſs. The good old man forcing himſelf to credit the tale he told, yet alarmed at the hurrying, the repentant confuſion of his ſon, laid before his daughters the petition he had made, as his granting it would reduce them to an entire dependance upon their brother: theſe generous young women confiding in his honor for the reſtitution he had promiſed, made no ſcruple of ſacrificing their immediate proſpects to his neceſſities. The elder was recently engaged to a gentleman in her neighbourhood, and as young Mompeſſon required the ſtricteſt ſecrecy, and her portion had been already named to her lover, the marriage was obliged to be protracted upon various pretences, which he had reaſon to ſuppoſe trivial; and piqued at the apparent inconſtancy of his miſtreſs, he entered the Army, and left the kingdom. Young Mompeſſon learned this diſtreſſing fact too late to prevent the miſery of his gentle ſiſter, who had inſiſted that it ſhould never be mentioned to him; and ſtung with remorſe, goaded too by the increaſing demands of his infamous ſeductreſs, he aſſented to the plan

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ſhe had often propoſed, of adjourning to thoſe gaming-tables, which the hereditary and elected legiſlators of the realm ſuffer their wives and their ſiſters to hold under their own roofs; where the younger and more lovely females of the family are inſtructed to act as decoys to the admiring, the unwary ſtranger. Good God!" continued Delamere, "that we ſhould wonder at, that we ſhould dare arraign the prevalence of licentious opinions amongſt the multitude, when they muſt be voluntarily blind, or elſe behold the general licentious conduct of the titled and the rich—a conduct from which the laws of the land either withhold them, or not having power to withhold, puniſh with ſeverity. The labourer muſt per force ſuffer his family to ſhare the produce of his toil:—the idleneſs or the deſertion of the labourer from *his* family is cognizable by the law; he is ſought after, brought back, impriſoned, and a better conduct enforced; whilſt the profligate Noble diſſipates the eſtates of his anceſtors with impunity, and leaves the titled heir of his vices a penſioner upon the community at large, through the channel of power. The labourer is uncertain if he may not to-morrow, by the fury of fanatical reform, be forbidden to have his humble dinner baked on the ſeventh day; and if he has ever profited by the Sunday ſchools thoſe very reformers of morals have ſo induſtriouſly propagated, he may read in an alehouſe newſpaper of the magnificent dinners, concerts, card parties, collations, and ſuppers given by his Grace, the Counteſs, Sir John, my Lady, and all the Right Honorable group upon the ſame ſacred day. Who then will dare to be indignant at this man's licentious opinions? If the anecdotes of the great

great do not always redound to their credit, if the daily prints will record their follies and their vices, and if the pious promoters of learning amongſt the labouring poor will enable them to proſe over "thoſe pictures of the times," why do we ſtand aſtoniſhed at the diffuſion of levelling principles? But pardon me—I have wandered from my ſubject, from the impetuous reflections it gave riſe to. I left poor Mompeſſon in a ſituation of danger, in which all that can be augured of evil fortune actually befel him: at the faſhionable gaming-tables, the ſoft accents of an harmonious voice, the ſeducing ſmiles of Beauty drew his attention perpetually from the opportunities Fortune offered in her beſt moods; and accelerated, redoubled her perſecutions when ſhe began to frown. If perchance he was ſucceſsful, ſalvers of liqueurs were preſented with officious repetition, till his judgment was wholly obſcured, and he loſt his advantages; if he was unfortunate, and wiſhed to retire, he was allured, ridiculed, ſneered at till he trebled his bets, and more than trebled thoſe debts, which the next morning he was compelled to make good.

"In the midſt, however, of theſe deſperate reſources, he contrived, in defiance of the diſtreſſes which on every ſide aſſailed him, to refund the ſum his family had ſo generouſly relinquiſhed; becauſe his heart every moment reproached him with the rupture he had unwittingly occaſioned between his ſiſter and her lover, and the conſequent miſery it had entailed upon her: but the effort haſtened his own deſtruction, and equally urged forward that of beings dearer to him than life. One evening, more propitious than uſual, had ſent him from

the Pharo table with ſome thouſands in his poſſeſſion, and with the money his ſituation enabled him at that moment to raiſe without ſuſpicion, amounted to the ſum he had accepted for a purpoſe ſo unworthy: he put the whole into his pocket-book, and was proceeding to veſt it in the hands of his father's agent, when a note reached him from Lady — —, for ſo is the wretch denominated, that ſhe muſt ſee him without a moment of delay at the uſual place of rendezvous, or her inevitable death would avenge his neglect. He flew to the appointed ſpot, and found her in an agony of mingled diſdain, rage, and apprehenſion, occaſioned by the threat of a jeweller to arreſt her immediately, unleſs ſhe paid him without heſitation, for a ſet of diamonds which he was well informed had diſappeared a few days after they had paſſed from his hands into her's. Mompeſſon heard the ſtory varniſhed as it came to his ear, with diſguſt, and felt his remorſe redoubled that for ſuch an abandoned extravagant, he had ruined the peace of his innocent ſiſter: all the arts and blandiſhments of his miſtreſs were inſufficient to induce him to alter his original diſpoſition of the money he at that moment carried about him, and he left her to execute his purpoſe. When it was accompliſhed however, his heart was torn with anxiety, for the fate of the woman to whom his profeſſions of inviolable attachment had been equally ardent and ſincere: and his total want of power to aſſiſt her, ſhould the menace of her irritated creditor be fulfilled, gave him horror inconceivable. In this ſtate he remained until the following day, reſolving very fully to forego his irregularities, and again become all that his fond family hoped he ſtill was, when

when a second billet was given him, dated from a spunging-house. He started—the contents drove him to distraction—the bane, the blaster of his youth informed him that she had a fatal vial in her possession, the contents of which she vowed to swallow in two hours, if in that time she were not set at liberty, that she might crush the flying rumours of her disgrace by her presence in the usual circles. He could not hesitate—he rushed on his destruction, became bail for her, and at her instigation, for he was compelled immediately to produce the sum in question, used the signature of his partners to a draft which he negociated, with an intention of taking it up with the first money he received, to which he subjoined a solemn vow never more to behold the face of the woman who had lured him to destroy his self-respect, his peace, and his honor.

" She saved him however, from the conflicts of love and prudence in preserving this last resolution, by sending him a letter of *congé*, in which she informed him that his backwardness to rescue her from scorn and contempt had opened her eyes to the decline of his affection, and she would not be indebted any further to compassion, for the services and assiduities she had a right to claim from fondness and gratitude: and she concluded by desiring him to return her letters and her picture, and forget that she had ever been so weak as to fancy they were pleasing to him—a request his indignant pride immediately prompted him to comply with. In fact this disgrace to her sex was alarmed at the share she had in the last desperate action of her victim, and plainly discerning that if he proceeded in the career she had forced him into,

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that he was inevitably undone, and if he retracted, he was no longer for her purposes—she therefore accepted the devoirs of a rich, but avaricious old Nobleman, the day after her liberation from confinement had been effected at the expence of all that was moſt dear to the unhappy Mompeſſon, of whom I have little further to ſay, but that his fatal lapſe was diſcovered by one of thoſe unexpected coincidences of circumſtances which it is impoſſible to foreſee: his friends, whoſe names he had ſo unwarrantably uſed, would fain have huſhed the tranſaction, and ſaved him from ignominy and danger; but it could not be accompliſhed.

" Mompeſſon, in the fury of deſpair, would have choſen inſtant annihilation; but his life was preſerved till better thoughts prevailed, and he fled, though not till every port was ſhut againſt him, and he found himſelf univerſally proſcribed and ſought after. The ſum he had taken with him was almoſt expended, and the foreign letters of credit he had received from his generous benefactors could not have extricated him from the diſtreſs that already aſſailed him, when you ſo providentially encountered him in his retreat, from whence he had diſpatched an account of his perilous ſituation to his family, at that moment incapable of hearing or relieving his anguiſh by the few words of pardon he had implored. His meſſenger, not very intelligent, left the letter entruſted to him with the hired nurſe attending poor old Mompeſſon, who had ſent only the day before his faithful domeſtic to me for intelligence of the unhappy wanderer, and with an intimation that death was faſt ſtealing him from his ſorrows. The billet of his ſon he never read; for his

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senses had failed before it arrived, and the old woman wholly forgot it, until I required it of her at my return to the Lodge.

"It is therefore to your humanity alone that I have been enabled to trace him, and by which I hope he has, ere now, escaped the possibility of a pursuit."

Miss Beauclerc bowed rather coldly, in return to this compliment.—"Good heavens!" thought she, "have I then wasted so much time and sympathy upon an object who has merely committed a vulgar forgery! and whose prostituted heart was not worthy the honor of being captivated by my Rosella—a fellow whose sensibility has been blunted by running the gauntlet of those beauties so profusely exhibited by the whole tribe of little Cassinos about town!"

Her indignation was roused by his presumption in having dared to direct one glance of admiration at Miss Montresor, and most seriously did she repent the many hours she had stolen from a much more important and delightful pursuit, for a man whose dying speech and confession would contain the horrible periods of Newgate eloquence, expressive of regret for being drawn in to spend his Sundays in bad company, the beginning of all evil, and giving up his time to the lewd pursuits of swearing, drinking, cards, and dice. What a history!—when compared, too, with the interesting dying speeches and confessions of repentant heroes, who discover to their attentive auditors a beautiful long buried wife shut up in one secret dungeon, and a still more beautiful discarded mistress very safely deposited in another, not forgetting the old chest in the corner, containing the mouldering bones of a murdered rival, reposing quietly

quietly upon the purloined title-deeds of his own eſtates, which being reſtored to ſome cottage-cradled damſel, their rightful owner, exalt her to an equality with ſome diſintereſted and illuſtrious lover, whoſe paſſion and valor have elucidated the whole buſineſs, and placed the ſaddle upon the right horſe.

Roſella, perceiving that Mr. Delamere was very apparently chagrined at the inauſpicious reverie of her friend, exerted herſelf to remove the impreſſion it could not fail to give him, by expreſſing the unmixed compaſſion ſhe ſtill felt for young Mompeſſon, and lamenting the fatal deſtiny which had led him into the ſociety of ſuch a wretch as Lady —— ——

Mr. Delamere was much gratified that her ſentiments remained unaltered; and whilſt he beſtowed the moſt animated encomiums upon her philanthropy, Miſs Beauclerc recollected the ungenerous appearance her ſilence muſt have, and atoned for it by a little exertion of the hypocriſy ſociety not only allows, but ſometimes exacts: ſhe renewed her civilities to Delamere, and made her peace by propoſing that they ſhould not ſeparate at dinner, which he gratefully acceded to.

Roſella now withdrew to enquire into the ſituation of poor Simpſon, which was lamentable enough, as ſhe found him combating a ſtrong fit of rheumatic gout with the treacherous arms of anger and impatience: the old butler had more than once before been diſcomfited by the ſame enemy, but he had always, until this time, been conſoled by the auxiliaries of kind attendance, a comfortable chamber, and a good bed. The attention of Roſella, however, enforced that of others, and at her repreſentation, Miſs Beauclerc

Beauclere desired that a nurse should be procured, that he might not suffer from the hurry and forgetfulness incident to a house of public resort: and at the repeated request of Mr. Delamere, his servant was, *en attendant*, constituted valet extraordinary to the ladies, who would be, he supposed, detained some time at Sedgfield by the circumstance, which he was not displeased at, because he intended to remain there several days himself to settle the affairs at the Lodge, and attend the interment of Mr. Mompesson.

These ceremonials being adjusted, and there appearing to be severals hours intervening between that of dinner, the gentleman proposed a rural promenade, offering himself as an escort to the ladies; and as Miss Beauclerc was no longer in such extreme haste to record the unhappy narrative of the mountain hero, she assented to the plan. On beholding the immense expanse of waves which could be plainly discerned beyond the eastern coast, she immediately figured to herself the sublimity of a young heroine gazing over the mountain tops, which gradually retire from her heroic vision, till they gain the delightful and celebrated appearance of blue mists; and then the majestic ocean, rolling its superb billows from the strand where her lover was torn from her, or she was torn from her lover; but unfortunately the German ocean, far from inspiring such heavenly fancies as the vicinity of a Venetian sea might have created, could raise in a common imagination, only the heavy murmurs of a Dutch fishery, or the coarse scenery of a grand bout of salmon pickling; it was cruel certainly, and Miss Beauclerc wished wished herself very vehemently on the celebrated banks of the Garonne, or gliding through the Rialto

Rialto, encircled by dying cadencies, garnished with pauses, and swells, and ritornellos.

Her companion and Mr. Delamere having left her to contemplate at her leisure, walked slowly forward; and frequently standing still to discuss with earnestness the merits and misfortunes of the Mompesson family, Rosella learned several interesting anecdotes of the culprit's amiable sisters, which heightened the interest she already felt in their fate.—When he had unwarily drawn the tears to her eyes, he suddenly checked himself, and introduced another subject; but that one which most occupied the imagination of each would still recur, and Rosella mentioned a wish of possessing the drawing traced by the recluse, in those lingering moments he would fain have urged forward, whilst not certain but the next might conduct him to annihilation.

"Perhaps," said Delamere, "he may have left it in the hut: do you suppose your friend would object to employ a day in visiting Stanmore Hills, which are well worthy her observation? If she assents, we will look once more at the habitation of the unhappy wanderer, and trace his erring steps to the scene which stole him for a moment from the recollection of misery and misconduct."

Rosella was pleased with the proposal, and her solicitations, joined to the prospect of waiting the convalescence of Simpson, induced Miss Beauclerc to concur readily in an excursion that promised a little variation from the tiresome sameness of her present life, in which her only amusement consisted of rocking the cradle of her elevated fancies; without perceiving any possibility that the inclinations of Rosella might take

take a bias that would fruſtrate all her heroic plans, which deſtined her as the reward of Lord Morteyne's diſintereſted paſſion, whom ſhe repreſented to herſelf and to Selina, ſighing in the extreme diſconſolation of that poetic death in love—abſence.

CHAP. XVII.

Rage for ſublime evaſions—the myſterious diſappearance of two heroines.

AT the grave of Mr. Mompeſſon, the moſt rugged cheek was watered with a tear; and there the curſes of wounded humanity were raiſed to heaven, againſt the ſhameleſs depravity of thoſe titled and untitled beings, who revel in our bloated metropolis upon the ſpoils of the young and the unwary.

Miſs Beauclerc and Roſella had not been able to abſent themſelves from this ſcene, where the ſtory of the young man's ſeduction and his wrongs, was told in various ways by many execrating tongues, and the annihilation of his family cloſed the tale. The effect of ſuch a hiſtory at a moment ſo ſolemn, however rude the rehearſal might be, can well be conceived. The ſobs of Roſella, who was accidentally ſtationed during the ſervice for the dead, by the ſide of George Mompeſſon's village nurſe, rendered outrageous by her grief, attracted univerſal attention:

tention: and she was by many supposed to be an intimate friend of the poor young ladies; by others it was whispered that she was a deserted sweet-heart of Mr. George—a fact that was proved from her being accompanied to the funeral by the little dog he had begged of his sister. Rosella was too much absorbed by her own sensations to hear the comments of her neighbours, and returned with her friend to their temporary residence, with a heart more heavy than she had ever before experienced.

When this painful ceremony was over, Mr. Delamere exerted himself to ensure to the Miss Mompessons the best attendance from the people to whose care they had been committed, both from motives of interest as well as of compassion; and that their still more unhappy brother, in whatever soil his errors had eternally banished him, might be secured at least from want. Several days were consumed in effecting these benevolent purposes, during which poor Simpson continued rather to decline than to amend in health, and was now perfectly unable to traverse his narrow chamber—a circumstance extremely *mal-à-propos*, because it detained Miss Beauclerc from the immediate execution of a very promising project, replete with interest and adventure; and though she had half intended to drop the old butler before she reached the grand scene of action, yet she could not reconcile the barbarity of leaving him wholly to the care of strangers, with the tender and delicate feelings of those amiable pattern personages, who so often raise an old and decrepid domestic to be one of the principal *dramatis personæ* in the fine-spun scene of sensibility.

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When every duty was discharged at the Lodge, Mr. Delamere reminded Miss Beauclerc of their intended ramble to Stanmore Hills; and the next morning, at an early hour, Rosella and herself stepped into a post-chaise, accompanied by him on horseback.—When they arrived at the little inn, whose romantic situation had so much attracted the approbation of Miss Beauclerc, the well-remembered equipage drew the children to the door.

"Oh pretty Lady! pretty Lady come back!" cried little Patty.—"Pretty Lady come back!" echoed the boy.

"She's come back—she's come back!" they both repeated, striking their hands together with eager exultation.

Rosella, who had recognized her play-fellows with nods and smiles, now alighted, and kissed the uplifted faces of Patty and her brother after their mother had very carefully wiped each little mouth with her apron.

"I perceive," said Mr. Delamere, smiling, "that even in this remote and almost desolate spot, the merits of Miss Montresor are warmly acknowledged."

"She is fond of children, and indulgent to them," replied Miss Beauclerc, "and the natural consequence of it is, that children are universally fond of her."

"I admit the inference," returned he;—"yet if Miss Montresor had been as remarkable for deformity and sourness of aspect as she is remarkable for the reverse of both, she might have courted the affection of those little distinguishing beings a considerable time before she could have boasted of so great a portion of their regard."

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" I cannot agree with you," said Miss Beauclerc, forgetting for a moment her heroism, " that the affections are naturally connected with personal graces. Rosella," continued she, " do you not remember the poor little child who was nursed by the old woman on the common? To hear it call for its own pretty Phebe—its own dear little Phebe, any one might have supposed this beloved Phebe to have been a sprightly young nurse-maid at least; instead of which, Rosella introduced me, when she led home the nursling, to a pretty little Phebe about eighty, with a person so deformed, and an aspect so forbidding, that it was curious to behold the process by which her features were twisted into an expression of something like tenderness to her orphan charge."

" I think your illustration implies a compliment to human nature," returned Delamere; " but I must still assert that the fondness which these little creatures so artlessly express for the ' pretty lady,' has much discernment in it: at least I may assert from experience, that she may very assuredly inspire admiration even before the moment when it is discovered that her benevolence entitles her to gratitude."

" This unfortunate youth is desperately enamoured of her!" thought Miss Beauclerc: she was elated however, by the equal certainty of other and still more desirable conquests; and when she reflected that this Delamere was the avowed friend of an exotic in the fashionable world, whose exploits not only *entitled* him to the honors of the platform (there he would not have been singular), but had even conducted him to the edge of it, she could not forbear betraying a chilling coldness in her manner, sufficiently observable. He saw the change in her aspect,

aſpect, and aſſnmed on his part, a diſtance and formality, the reſult perhaps of a diſinclination that either herſelf or her young companion ſhould ſuppoſe he had formed pretenſions they felt no wiſh of encouraging.

After having taken refreſhment, the party began to aſcend the hill leading to the ſpot they meant to viſit. Mr. Delamere ſuffered Roſella and her little aſſociates, who would not leave her a moment, to paſs him ; and having vainly offered his aſſiſtance to Miſs Beauclerc, who refuſed it however with complacency, he walked with an air of nonchalance by her ſide, till they had reached Molly's cottage. Here Roſella waited his approach ; and was ſurpriſed at his ſilence and gravity, which yet a moment of reflection accounted for, as it reminded her that Mr. Delamere had taken an eternal leave of the wretched Mompreſſon at that place not long ſince.

Influenced by this idea, ſhe turned back to meet him, and her efforts to chaſe the gloom from his countenance ſoon ſucceeded: whilſt Miſs Beauclerc, naturally of an inoffenſive and placid diſpoſition, as eaſily forgot her heroic dignity, and converſed with her uſual freedom and good-humour.

Molly was at home, and ran out to ax the gentlefolks if they would not walk in, a civility they declined ; but the children conſented to quit the prerty lady, to realize ſome expectations of a rural feaſt. But Miſs Beauclerc, who had never before beheld the picturesque ſcene aaound her, gazed at it with aſtoniſhment, whilſt Roſella endeavoured to diſcover a path that might lead her to the forlorn hut lately ſo ſtrangely inhabited : but it required long cuſtom

tom to find a ſcarcely trodden track in ſo wild a ſolitude ; and Mrs. Spanger being applied to for aſſiſtance, called to a half-cloathed girl to lead the way to the cot, where ſhe had ſometimes been diſpatched with a loaf or waſhed linen.

" Poor Gentleman," exclaimed the woman, when ſhe heard the requeſt, " our landlord ſay, a ſuppoſe a quoined golden guineas, and wad be honged for it. God help un, a never quoined any that I ſee ; a wos more like to be crazed we love ſay I, and I be ſure a was—for ſometime a would eat a mite, and ſometime a woudn't touch a bit—and ſometime a wou'd walk about all night, ſo Jack ſay ; and then ſometime a wou'd tak to as bed, and not get oop all day !"

Mr. Delamere here cut ſhort the report ; but reflections would ariſe that, whilſt Mompeſſon was thus dragging on exiſtence, and deploring his blaſted hopes, the companions of his fleeting, his treacherous enjoyments no longer uttered his name but to load it with obloquy and contempt, not for having committed evil, but for being betrayed into that particular ſpecies of diſhoneſty which the law could reach. The laugh, the jeſt, the trifling amuſement of the moment followed the mention of his diſgrace, with a harmony no regret for him diſturbed ; and at that table where he had been fleeced of thouſands, the ſame harpies preſided, and ſucceſſive fools were cheated with equal impunity ;—whilſt the woman who had more immediately precipitated the unhappy youth into the gulph of infamy, affected to regret that his ſudden diſappearance prevented the chaſtiſement ſhe had charged her footman to give him: and though no one credited the innocence ſhe aimed to eſtabliſh, yet all who heard her, pretended

tended they did, and joined with the Right Honorable Lady———, in ſhrugs of admiration at the audacity of young Cits. When ſhe could thus force a chorus to her recitative, ſhe cared little for the indignation, faſhion, and ſuavity condemned to ſilence.

At length Roſella once more entered the wretched aſylum, where the deſpairing countenance of Mompeſſon met her eye, charged with the confuſion of a ſoul on which ſelf-accuſation and conſcious guilt did not ſit eaſily. The ſtraw which had ſerved him for repoſe, when repoſe had not fled him, ſtill lay in the corner; but the drawing of Molly's cottage either himſelf, or ſome other perſon, had removed.

Miſs Beauclerc ſoon quitted the hut to ſurvey the ſurrounding ſcenery, which was indeed extremely well fitted to inſpire ſome of thoſe ſublime ideas that floated on her imagination; and the effect it produced heightened her impatience to proceed on her journey, in ſpite of the incapacity of poor Simpſon to attend her. Suddenly ſhe haſtened her companions back to the inn, ſcarcely allowing Roſella to go in queſt of little Patty and her brother, whilſt ſhe waited where the path turned towards Molly's dwelling.

"I cannot but admire the preſevering ſpirit of charity which governs your mind," ſaid Mr. Delamere, who accompanied her; "whilſt I perceive that of others evaporate with the emotion of the moment."

"If you allude to Miſs Beauclerc," ſaid Roſella, eagerly, "your opinion does her injuſtice."

"I believe not," returned he: "but may I take the liberty of enquiring if you are of her family, either by affinity or alliance?"

After a moment of embarraſſment, which the abruptneſs

abruptneſs of the queſtion created, Roſella replied that ſhe was not in the remoteſt degree related to her friend, but that ſhe reſpected her as the moſt generous and beſt of women. Little Patty and her brother now joined them, and in a few minutes the whole party overtook Miſs Beauclerc, who was returning to the inn to haſten the dinner, becauſe ſhe had reſolved to travel back to Sedgfield the ſame evening; a precipitation that ſurpriſed and rather offended Mr. Delamere, as ſhe had not long before reſolved to remain in her preſent quarters two or three days, to explore ſtill further the beauties of the place. Roſella appeared diſappointed, but was ſilent upon the ſubject; and late in the evening the party re-entered Sedgfield.

Simpſon was not improved in health ſince the morning, and complained very grievouſly, when his Lady paid him a compaſſionate viſit whilſt her ſupper table was being arranged: ſhe expreſſed her chagrin at his indiſpoſition, a chagrin which was heightened, ſhe ſaid, by the unfortunate neceſſity in which ſhe found herſelf, of immediately reſuming her journey.

The old man was thunderſtruck at this intelligence; nor was he in the leaſt conſoled by the proſpect of being abandoned, ſick and helpleſs, in a place to which he was entirely a ſtranger, at the ſight of a purſe his Lady put into his hand, and her aſſurances that ſhe would enjoin the people of the houſe to give him every attention.

Roſella was not preſent at this interview; and only learned, when ſhe retired for the night, after having ſimply bade Mr. Delamere good evening, that at four the next morning, a chaiſe was ordered to convey Miſs Beauclerc and herſelf

ſelf towards Scotland.—Extreme aſtoniſhment, and an emotion nearly allied to diſpleaſure, aroſe in the mind of Roſella at the unprecedented conduct of her friend. The ſituation of Simpſon, whom it was cruelty to leave without actual neceſſity, and the ſtrange rudeneſs of quitting Mr. Delamere in a manner ſo abrupt, filled her with diſmay, and ſhe vainly eſſayed to alter the determination of Miſs Beauclerc by repreſentation and entreaty. But ſhe was at length ſilenced by a very ſolemn prediction, that there were myſterious reaſons for ſuch a conduct, which would hereafter juſtify it.

At four in the morning therefore, Miſs Beauclerc deſcended the ſtaircaſe of the inn, with all the ſilence and precipitation of a young beauty, flying from the power of ſome atrocious gentle or noble, who, in carrying her towards his never-failing chateau in Scotland, or Ireland, or Wales, good-naturedly ſtops ſhort in his enterprize to loiter on the road: and then the diſtreſſed heroine, either by bribing the maid of the hôtellerie, or by unlocking all the doors at midnight with a *paſſe-par-tout* of her own peculiar invention, eſcapes, leaving the diſappointed lover

——— "To ſtorm and ſtare,
"And load with curſes the withdrawing fair."

And in this manner did Miſs Beauclerc imagine the forſaken Delamere would vent the firſt tranſports of his diſappointment, until the tender remembrance of the charms of the cruel fugitive ſubdued his ſoul, and forced the hard-wrung drops of anguiſh from his eyes.

As the lady choſe now to travel *incog.* ſhe left her carriage at Sedgfield, having previouſly or-

dered Simpson to use it when he received instructions to rejoin her. This arrangement was thought strange by Rosella, and she stepped into a hack-chaise in a very disconsolate mood, as she had been forbidden to see the old man before her departure, and now reflected, with considerable disquiet, that she was travelling under the sole protection of a person who, however her affection and long cherished gratitude might soften the general tenor of her conduct and conversation, appeared inclined to follow without reflection, every freak of a distempered fancy.

The farewel intimation of Mr. Mordaunt rose to her recollection, and she was tempted for a moment, so far to profit by it, as to state to him her present situation; but the well-remembered kindness and generosity Miss Beauclerc had displayed towards her from infancy, repelled all idea of appealing from her guidance: and as she sat shivering in a broken windowed chaise, breakfastless, in a dark rainy morning before sunrise, the worldly idea of seeking refuge in the counsels of discretion from the adventures that appeared to await her, may be excused a young heroine not yet inured to the hardships of one campaign in the walks of romance.

Miss Beauclerc took a hasty breakfast at Durham, but declined staying to view the place, in the fear that Delamere would pursue the object of his passion, and force an explanation she chose to forego. In the same hasty manner she passed through Newcastle and Morpeth, and still occupied by her apprehensions, instead of continuing in the high road, directed the driver to Warkworth, hoping, by this well-precedented manœuvre, to elude the fond enquiries of the distracted lover. At this place she condescended

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to attend to her own fatigue and the entreaties of Roſella, and having ordered a dinner, ſat down with great ſelf-complacency to think of the dangers ſhe had paſſed.

After having relieved, by two hours of reſt, the wearineſs which, in ſpite of heroiſm, had aſſailed her, and gazed, as all ſublime travellers do, with wonder and awe and rapture upon the ocean's far extending billows, which could be diſcerned from the apartment ſhe was placed in, ſhe began to ſigh for amuſement or occupation. In the towns ſhe had paſſed, ſhe had been repeatedly aſked if ſhe would not ſtay to behold this particular beauty or that particular curioſity; ſo ſhe applied to the people around her, to be informed of the beauties and curioſities worthy of renown in Warkworth, and was told that the hermitage up the river was the moſt curiouſeſt place any gentlefolks might wiſh to ſee.

To the hermitage therefore, Miſs Beauclerc reſolved to dedicate the evening, provided ſhe were not prevented by the effects of Mr. Delamere's lover-like deſpair, of which, notwithſtanding her diſinclination for an immediate *denouement*, ſhe felt entremely ſurpriſed not to have received, by the interference of fate, any intimation. However, ſhe did not yet give up the idea of being called to his bed-ſide, where her preſence might be required, in conſequence of a piſtol ball, or a fall from his ſteed, puſhed by the impatience of the enamoured rider, beyond his ſtrength; for ſhe well knew that a lover will ſometimes drive his ſpurs into the ſides of his horſe, in proportion as he feels the arrows of the *tender* paſſion wounding his own ſuſceptible boſom.

As Miſs Beauclerc underſtood that the hermitage might be attained by water, ſhe ordered a boat to take her up the river; but was informed that a poſt-chaiſe would convey her there in a much ſhorter time, and was adviſed to alter her plan upon the further doubt that aroſe, of there being any boat in a condition to receive ladies who were not exactly cloathed in ſack-cloth and aſhes: but the obſtinacy of Miſs Beauclerc overcame all repreſentation, and at length a fiſhing ſkiff was procured, very dirty indeed, and not very dry; yet theſe objections could not prove impediments to a gentle fair-one, bent upon enjoying at every event,

"The moon ſhining over the ſtream,
"Gentle harmony breathing around,
"The feathering oar reflecting the gleam,
"Beating time to the echo's ſoft ſound."

Now it was that ſhe regretted the want of a lute, that delightful companion to all blooming damſels of heroic ſtandard. A harp Roſella could play upon; but then a modern one was cumbrous to carry from place to place, though indeed ſhe recollected to have read of a ſublime young lady, who, in her perilous adventures, all atchieved on foot, carried her Welch harp upon her back from one end of the iſland to the other, taking care to preſerve a moſt graceful deportment the whole way.

Another captivating heroine ſhe remembered to have read of, who made a pedeſtrian tour on the Continent of more than eight hundred miles, in purſuance of the dictates of "Plain Senſe," and ſtill more conſpicuous perſeverance—a feat the

the lady performed with her wardrobe under her arm, one pair of ſhoes upon her delicate feet, a chance-brought ducat in her pocket, a hurdy-gurdy depending in a ſtring from her ivory neck, and her beautiful *frame* ſupported by coarſe bread, or milk pottage, which *once* a day her good genius, and the charity of peaſants, preſented to her.

This laſt method of ſeeking adventures was extremely well accomodated to the fancy of Miſs Beauclerc, and ſhe reſolved upon the firſt opportunity to procure a guitar or mandoline for Roſella. *En attendant*, as it was abſolutely neceſſary that the aquatic adventure ſhe was on the point of engaging in, ſhould not be undertaken without muſic of ſome kind, the maſter of the inn was directed to enquire in the place for ſome dulcet-eared ſwain, a retainer of the olive-wreathed god.

The landlord, extremely ſurpriſed at ſuch a demand, as well as offended at the preference which had been given to a filthy boat over his neat poſt-chaiſe, made the perquiſition required of him, with ſo little ceremony and attention to the dignity of his fair gueſts, that by the time a ſuperannuated deaf fifer, formerly belonging to the Northumberland Militia, had been dragged from his hovel to accompany the ladies to the hermitage, half the town were waiting with extreme impatience for a ſight of the crazy woman dancing to Will Hobbes's muſic; for ſuch had been my landlord's witty innuendo.

Miſs Beauclerc received the devoirs of this ancient ſervant of Apollo and Mars with great condeſcenſion, and accepted the offered ſervices of himſelf and his fife, ſince neither flute, lute, oboe, or clarinet could be obtained.

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The owner of the skiff, who had been washing and mopping with great effort and perseverance from the moment his commission had been given him, now signified that it was ready, and Miss Beauclerc sallied forth, attended by Rosella, who appeared mortified and depressed; but the expression of her countenance was changed to consternation on seeing a number of people assembled at the inn door to behold her embarkation.—She seized the arm of her friend, and making an effort to draw her back to the apartment they had quitted, accompanied the motion with an earnest entreaty to wait till the crowd dispersed; but the adventurous dame was inflexible. Indeed she discovered nothing unpleasant in being exposed to the gaze of the Warkworth populace, because she concluded that the beauty of her young companion, and her own interesting mien of silent sorrow, had alone gathered it together: and thus poor Rosella was constrained to face the eager and rude glances of the multitude, who were however mollified into a silent curiosity by the confused agitation which her downcast eye and glowing cheek expressed.

But a general grin succeeded, when Miss Beauclerc was ushered into the boat by the fisherman and the old fifer, who, having put on his antient finery, as being his best array, looked literally like a thing "made up of shreds and patches." Rosella followed much against her inclination, shocked at the absurdity of her once revered friend, and fearing to look forward to the adventures her whimsical fancies might still further plunge them into.

Their officious attendants accompanied them a short way on the banks of the river; but as the

crazy

crazy lady was wrapping herself up as fast as possible in sublime meditation, they could not discover, on her part, any preparation to amuse them in the manner the landlord had announced, and they fell off by degrees, and soon vanished entirely.

CHAP. XVIII.

Rage for discovering entombed charmers—a humiliating rencontre.

MISS BEAUCLERC had, by this time, started from her reverie, and looking round, beheld Rosella with a mien melancholy and pensive enough to have satisfied the most refined of tastes. She was pleased with the observation.—"Now," whispered she, "my lovely child is divine! there wanted but this expression of countenance to make her perfect!"

The fifer sat in the stern of the vessel as upright and straight as a reed; his hat, exhibiting a variety of colors, and feathered on every side to the brim, had been for many years kicked and laid by, and thrown about and taken care of alternately, till it had acquired several unintentional forms, and had lost a considerable part of its original dignity: but the wearer felt decorated and consequential, and, like an old courser in a dust-cart, still pricked up his ears, and kept his paces as well as he could.

Miss Beauclerc, having finished her thankful ejaculation, turned her eye upon the fifer, and remembering that "music is the food of love," desired

desired him to play some pathetic air, such as doubtless he well recollected to have wept at in his youth. The poor fellow understanding some part of her command, but very far from hearing the extent of it, drew forth his instrument, which had almost been as ill-treated as his hat, though the injuries of time had been rather meliorated by the aids of industry and cobbler's ends, and set off *con molto spirito* in those well-known strains entitled the White Cockade, at the same time marching as he sat, a very quick pace against the loose boards that covered the bottom of the skiff; which movement not only supplied the place of the absent drum, but very unfortunately threw over his auditors a great part of the bilge-water secreted under this false flooring.

Rosella, mortified and vexed as she had been, instantly lost her pensive mien in an unconquerable fit of laughter, whilst Miss Beauclerc exerted her voice to arrest the career of this noisy son of Harmony; but having called and entreated to no purpose for some time, she was informed by the boatmen that Will Hobbes was so dunny, he could not hear his own performance.

The man was obliged to quit his oars, that he might, at the urgent request of the lady, make him sensible that she wished him to restore peace to her ears, and to her wounded sensibility; for the fifer sat with his head averted from his party, and his eyes fixed upon the water that flowed from beneath the stern. A rough salutation upon the shoulder interrupted his strains, and Miss Beauclerc, by a variety of gestures, obtained a much-desired repose for the neighbouring echoes, though not before he had, in eager wishes to earn the reward which had been promised, changed his melody, to try if he could

could not succeed better in "Moll in the Wad," —"the Cameronian Rant," and "the Morgan Rattler."

Rosella felt for his wounded reputation, and would have endeavoured to praise his performance, but that at the first half-heard sentence of commendation he hastily put his hand to his pocket, with on intimation that he was not tired, and could blow for six hours without stopping.

Miss Beauclerc, whose serene dignity had been cruelly put to the rout, arrested him however with a frown, and the poor fellow remained quiet till the boatman announced that they were near the hermitage, which she found worthy of her attention, and forgot, in contemplating it her recent disappointment.

The hollow cliff overhanging the river, in whose vaulted roof the prayer and hymn of the recluse had often broken the silence of night, could not but be highly interesting: it was too sublime to be shared by her rude and ignorant conductors, and they were therefore instructed to remain in the boat, whilst Rosella and herself entered the sacred receptacle of piety and meditation.

Miss Beauclerc examined, with attention, every part of the place said to be the remains of the hermit's kitchen, and carefully sounded the ground and the walls, in the hope of discovering, like so many other heroines, either a trap-door, or a repository for family treasures, and confessions of horrible crimes and uncommon frauds locked up in inlaid or curious cabinets, by which the lands, tenements, castles, dungeons, and caverns for many miles round might suddenly be snatched from their present peaceful and unsuspicious owners, and descend, with a profusion

of bluſhing honors upon the head of a drooping and tender-ſouled damſel, whom the whole world had till then combined to treat with ſcorn and obloquy; except indeed, the generous and manly-formed young gentleman, her happy lover, who never, for a moment, loſes ſight of the innate dignity of her ſoul, or ceaſes to bow down to the ſublime elevation of her meek and humble deportment.

But however eager Miſs Beauclerc might be in the ſearch, no good fortune of this kind awaited her, and ſhe paſſed into the chapel with a ſtrong preſentiment that ſhe ſhould there be more ſucceſsful: at leaſt ſhe could ſcarcely fail, ſhe thought, to diſcover the ſubterraneous paſſages and vaults ſo very generally appertaining to places of the ſmalleſt reputation in the annals of romance, where lovely and gentle creatures have an opportunity of initiating themſelves into the ſcience of tracing the hiſtories, amours, and amourettes of their forefathers, and bringing to light all the *faux-pas* of their grandmamas and old aunts, merely by walking with a ſolemn pace amidſt their dry bones, with lamps half extinguiſhed.

Yet a glimpſe of happineſs awaited Miſs Beauclerc, more tranſporting than ſhe had dared to hope in the higheſt flight of enthuſiaſm. At the further end of the chapel a recumbent female figure caught her eye, and a bliſsful idea darted like a ray of light into her mind, that ſhe ſhould be the fortunate diſcoverer of ſome hapleſs good lady who might have been confied ten, twenty, perhaps thirty years in a cell adjoining this place; whilſt a barbarous huſband, having buried, inſtead of her, a curious effigy, compoſed of ſtraw and old linen, very freely followed the bent of his

his fancies, and married some beautiful but licentious charmer, whose atrocious children seize, in due time, what they conceive to be their inheritance, and revel on the spoils, until papa's lawful and virtuous wife steps out of her enforced retirement, and places every body in their proper situations.

The imaginations of Miss Beauclerc, fertile and rapid, in an instant spun forth such a web, that she remained entranced in the delightful intricacies of her own fantastic fancies. One moment the reclining dame was of the family of her deceased Raymond, who, having been forcibly imprisoned in this abode for nearly half a century, could now discover to her enraptured great grand-daughter some splendid fortune to which she could claim a right. The next instant she as hastily supposed the figure to be one of her own female ancestors, who could impart the customary information in similar cases, which must entitle her ever after to the sudden dignity of being addressed as Lady Sophia Beauclerc at least, if it should not create her a Baroness in her own right.

Under the influence of these ideas, she addressed the personage with a mixture of veneration for her supposed affinity and virtues, and of compassion for her sufferings and wrongs; and to the extreme surprize and affright of Rosella threw herself upon her knees which had been trembling under her for some time past with agitation, and burst into the following ejaculation:—

"Much-injured and patient being, whoe'er thou art—whether, as my heart forebodes, the blood which circles in these veins derives its source from the more stagnant streams that creep through your's—or, as my wishes more eagerly

point,

point, whether you gave being to the grandfather of my love, accept the sustaining cares of your admiring and tender liberators! No longer shall the iron hand of oppressive Tyranny immure your half-fainted form in this desolate spot —no, my voice, and the voice of your fair and lovely child, my beauteous Rosella, shall proclaim to the world, which now believes you to be mouldering in the dust, that you live to bless your fond and astonished progeny: say by what miracle—by what wonderful interference of Providence have you escaped so long the fury of your relentless jailer? Alas! how often has he not raised the cup of death to your guileless lips —how often has he not held the poniard to your emaciated bosom! But Fate staid his ruthless hand, that we might thus meet—that we might thus——"

"Good Heaven, Madam!" exclaimed Rosella, who could no longer restrain her astonishment and consternation, "who are you thus addressing? I see no human figure but that marble one stretched over the tomb."

Miss Beauclerc shook her head.—"Well may you suppose," replied she, "that this dear and venerable sufferer is what you say: the immensity of her misfortunes have deadened those fine and sensitive feelings, which often made her weep the fate of the autumnal leaf torn from its parent tree by the relentless blast; but assist me incredulous Rosella, to rise, that I may instantly succour this patient and much wronged saint, who has, I suppose, for a temporary space, lost the sensation of her former woes and present happiness by the too sudden tide of hope and joy."

Rosella endeavoured to obey the command: but alas! Miss Beauclerc now unluckily discovered

vered that she was not capable of entering the lists with those delicately formed, but tough constitutioned heroines, who dance out of their castles at midnight, and are so often drenched with dew and rain, and pelted with hail, and scorched by lightning, and puffed by wintry blasts, and pinched by frosts, till they are absolutely compelled to steal from their briny repository a few of the sacred drops dedicated to sensibility to thaw their beautiful noses withal.

The hardships such fair creatures sustain, both corporeal as well as mental, were so familiar to the imagination of Miss Beauclerc, that she was confounded to find herself almost unable to move, after her kneeling apostrophe, from a sudden and violent rheumatic pain in her limbs, brought on most probably by evening walks and fatigue, sitting in a wet boat, and finally, prostrating herself in a distillation from the damp roof of the hermitage.

Rosella, previously terrified by the effusion of heroism she had heard, found her alarm so much increased by the agony her luckless friend appeared to be in, that she flew towards the boat, and called the man who had rowed it, and their musical appendage, the fifer, to assist in removing her to it.

Whilst they were fastening the skiff, that they might attend her summons, she returned to Miss Beauclerc, and found her again fallen upon her knees, in apparent devotion.

"Dear Madam," said Rosella, "the place is quite wet; you will kill yourself!"

"My child," replied the lady very gravely, "in your absence I heard a hollow sighing near me, accompanied by a gentle step; supposing it to be you, I spoke, when suddenly the step

ſtep and the ſighing ceaſed, and I beheld a figure glide acroſs the remoteſt part of the chapel, and vaniſh beneath the altar. Something myſterious appertains to this place.—I cannot but believe that the fragile form I originally beheld reclining deſpondingly upon that tomb, has been conveyed by ſome machination from our ſight, and that marble figure replaced in its room. My eyes did not deceive me; I diſtinctly ſaw an imploring aſpect gazing upon me, and the hands raiſed in entreaty: but the vile monſter who perſecutes this poor ſecluded victim, has invented this expedient to prevent a diſcovery of his atrocity, and I plainly perceive this is not the fortunate moment to work the delivery of the hapleſs priſoner, who muſt yet languiſh ſome time ere her tyrant is forced to confeſs her wrongs, and diſcloſe the ſecret of her confinement."

Roſella, without replying, again raiſed Miſs Beauclerc with conſiderable difficulty; and the men now approaching her, ſhe was conveyed to the boat, and taken back to the inn, where the party did not arrive till ſome hours after the evening had cloſed in. In the night, ſhe found her indiſpoſition increaſe ſo faſt upon her, to her own infinite mortification, and the extreme diſtreſs and anxiety of Roſella, that, on the following day, ſhe was confined to her bed, inſtead of paſſing it as ſhe had intended, in minutely ſurveying the ruins of the caſtle, where ſhe had expected to make ſuch diſcoveries of heroes recorded and unrecorded, that a peruſal of the fragments ſhe meant to have given the public in ſeven thick volumes, would have made the Brutus wigs and banded wigs of her fair

and

and gentle readers to ſtand an end with affrighted expectation.

Her poor Roſella, having paſſed more than half the night at her bed-ſide, now deſired permiſſion to make Mr. Mordaunt and Mrs. Ellinger acquainted her ſituation, that they might ſend her ſuch aſſiſtance as ſhe required: but Miſs Beauclerc abſolutely forbade it in a tone ſo peremptory, that her companion felt unable to diſobey her, though ſhe was ſcarcely equal to the taſk of ſupporting her ſpirits ſufficiently to perform, as ſhe wiſhed, thoſe little offices for the invalid, which inclination and humanity equally prompted.

The people of the inn were for ſome time uncertain how far their inmates might be ſupplied with that which procures, in ſuch places, the beſt and moſt unfeigned welcome; and as the travellers appeared totally unconnected, and evinced no intention of changing their abode for one better adapted to a ſick perſon, they experienced a kind of ſullen and cold civility, which, as the ſtrength of Miſs Beauclerc declined, degenerated very often into negligence, and a diſpoſition to avoid executing her commands.

Roſella was ſometimes compelled, after having rung the bell more than once, to deſcend to the bar, and make known her wiſhes—a taſk ſhe never performed but upon the greateſt emergency, becauſe it ſubjected her to the impertinent gaze of every individual in the houſe, from the ſtrutting landlord to John Oſtler. Her ſituation was, by theſe means, rendered ſo inſupportable, that ſhe reſolved to hazard the loſs of Miſs Beauclerc's friendſhip by communicating it to Mr. Mordaunt; for ſhe believed it impoſſible

poſſible that any circumſtance could occur to her, where the benefit of that advice he had ſo impreſſively promiſed, could be more deſirable. Yet a reluctance to forfeit at once a countenance and protection ſhe had ever ſo highly prized, and which, for ſo many years back, had been her greateſt boaſt, and the ſource of all the pleaſant moments ſhe had yet known, made her defer the taſk, in the hope that each day would render it leſs neceſſary by the amending health of her miſtaken, but ever kind friend.

Miſs Beauclerc meantime, would moſt probably have ſoon recovered from her indiſpoſition, had ſhe not every day very imprudently, and in ſpite of the admonitions of Roſella, caught additional colds by ſitting up in her bed for ſeveral hours to write—an employment ſhe engaged in, in compliance with the rules ſhe had never obſerved to have been violated by matronly heroines, who always, as a legacy to their beautiful daughters, leave behind them a long narrative of their youthful adventures, imprudences, perſecutions, and amourettes, all written in their laſt moments, ſealed up very carefully, and addreſſed to their beloved Hermiones, Jacquelinas, Geraldinas, and Philippinas. But in the midſt of Miſs Beauclerc's ſublime occupation to the ſame purpoſe, ſhe was one luckleſs day ſeized with ſo violent a ſpaſm, that Roſella, in the utmoſt terror, having rung as uſual in vain, flew down ſtairs to procure better aſſiſtance than it was in her power to give.

It was not however, at that moment very eaſily to be obtained; for the inn was in commotion with a poſt-chaiſe juſt arrived, a gentlemen's carriage, and ſervants changing horſes; whilſt

whilſt a company of farmers and mechanics drinking in one room, and a party calling themſelves gentlemen, devouring a haunch of veniſon in another, created ſuch a rivalry for the honor of the yeomanry on one ſide, and for the ſuperior proweſs of Eſquires on the other, that it was ſcarcely poſſible, for every individual the houſe could muſter, to ſupply a ſufficient quantity of nectar for theſe heroes of the North.

Yet Roſella preſſed forward, ſcarcely obſerving the uproar that reigned around her, and arreſting the ſteps of a waiter who was flying acroſs a paſſage, demanded the inſtant attendance of ſome female to the ſick lady. The man uttering the mechanical "Yes, Ma'am," purſued his way; and ſhe had been ſufficiently accuſtomed to this method, to underſtand what it meant. With increaſed diſtreſs therefore, ſhe ran towards the bar, to entreat immediate aſſiſtance from the miſtreſs of the houſe; but before ſhe could reach it, ſhe was encountered by a young man more than half intoxicated, who from her negligent morning dreſs, and her being without a hat, probably miſtook her for the landlady's fair daughter or niece; and inſtantly aſſuming the rural gallant, he informed her with ſeveral oaths and imprecations, that ſhe was a d——d fine girl.

Roſella, extremely terrified, looked round her for protection, and obſerving through a ſaſhed door the landlady employed in making very low courteſies to her poſt-horſe cuſtomers in the ſtable-yard, ſhe ruſhed towards it, calling the woman by her name.

"Stay—ſtop—let down the ſtep," exclaimed a voice from the poſt-chaiſe, which was driving off with furious haſte.

Roſella's

Roſella's tormenter ſtill followed her, and ſhe reiterated her claims upon the attention of the landlady, who pretending not to hear her, advanced to another carriage with freſh compliments and freſh courteſies. "Good God, what inhumanity!" exclaimed ſhe, burſting into tears: "what muſt I do?"

At this moment ſhe heard her own name repeated; and Mr. Delamere taking her hand, led her into a ſmall room, and ſhut the door. "You ſurely cannot be here alone?" demanded he; "where is Miſs Beauclerc?"

"Confined to her bed by illneſs," returned Roſella, whoſe tears were rather checked by ſurpriſe, and a hope of relief from her embarraſſment—"and I cannot procure her proper aſſiſtance."

Delamere ſeemed much ſhocked; for he conſtrued the ſentence ſhe thus haſtily uttered into an avowal of poverty, which the treatment he had a minute before ſeen her experience from the woman of the houſe, well corroborated.

"I am concerned," returned he, "that I muſt leave the place this hour, this very moment—Mompeſſon has learned the horrible news I would have concealed, and has written that he will deliver himſelf to his purſuers:—from this coaſt he was to have embarked; and I have been ſeeking him from the inſtant I received his deſpairing letter, that I may prevent if poſſible, his intention; if I miſs him to-day, he is undone. But I cannot even at ſuch a moment, be ſo wholly concerned for him, as not to feel intereſted for Miſs Montreſor, whom I muſt entreat, at the hazard of being thought impertinent, to have a ſufficient regard for her own welfare, to place herſelf under the protection.

tion of any relation or female friend she may possess, rather than remain in the exposed situation, in which I have now the real mortification to find her."

When the ear of Rosella was saluted with this remonstrance, she felt as if a thunderbolt had fallen at her feet: in the suspension of her faculties she suffered him, unresisted and unheeded, to put a paper into her hand, and saw him quit the room without the power of articulating a syllable. An involuntary emotion of anger and resentment arose in her bosom against Miss Beauclerc, who had so cruelly circumstanced her, by the follies which had operated to reduce her to the helpless state she was in; but the recollection of that helpless state, and of her sufferings, as instantly banished them from her mind, and as she found she could not obtain from the cares of others any alleviation of her malady, she returned to her chamber to offer at least her own.

She found the invalid much relieved by some drops she had given her before she had quitted the chamber, and now inclined to doze—a symptom Rosella was pleased to observe, and therefore indulged it. She had not yet recovered from the shock and consternation the reproof of Mr. Delamere had occasioned her; and as she sat silently by the side of the bed, his words, actions, and looks recurring more distinctly to her mind, she opened the paper, which she had retained almost unconsciously in her hand, and beheld a bank-note of twenty pounds.

A crimson blush suffused her whole face at this unexpected object, and it fell from her nerveless hands. Severely humiliated, her pride deeply

deeply wounded, and every idea of decorum completely outraged, she recollected the tenor of her complaint to Mr. Delamere, and guessing the construction he had put upon it, she felt as if every hope and prospect of her youth were totally annihilated. To be suspected of soliciting alms! Never more, she imagined, should she be able to look up—above all she could brave a thousand deaths, rather than again endure the horror of beholding Mr. Delamere.

Amidst the anguish of her reflections, she resolved, at least, to follow his disinterested advice, and snatching a pen from Miss Beauclerc's secretaire, which was always placed close to the bed, she eagerly began a letter to Mr. Mordaunt; but had not proceeded in it three lines before she was interrupted by a tapping at the door, and fearing the noise might disturb the invalid if it were repeated, hastily obeyed the intimation, and found that the intruder was the landlady, who accosted her with a dignified mien, and condescended to ax pardon for being so troublesome, being that she could not rest, she said, till she knew how the gentlewoman was. "And, Miss," continued the woman, "I thought I would just make bold to inform you, that you might tell your frind, that we niver strikes up no scores; so as I coomed oop stairs, I just brought wi me this little *merandum* of what the gentlewoman and ye ha had, for it's a week to day sin ye coomed here."

"You wish to be paid?" said Rosella, taking the bill which she held out to her.

"Why," returned the landlady, "we are always paid daily by our goers and coomers; but as the gentlewoman seemed quite a lady, we ha staid till the week was oop."

"Very

"Very well," ſaid Roſella; "when my friend wakes, I will tell her ſo."

"Why, Miſs," replied the woman, in a voice rather exalted, "I can't come oop again to-day, for I am ſo buſy that I —— and to be ſure it can make noo great difference if the gentlewoman wakes now or five minutes hence, for her bit of dinner."

Miſs Beauclerc, who was already diſturbed by her vociferation, aſked what was the matter; and Roſella, with an indignation ſhe could not ſuppreſs, informed her.

"You muſt not," ſaid the ſick lady, "look for delicacy or refinement from ſuch people as thoſe, my love: take ſome money from the private drawer of my eſcrutoire, and pay the bill."

The landlady having liſtened very attentively to the converſation, on hearing theſe words, ſhut the chamber door, leſt the bawling of the folks below ſhould diſcompoſe the poor dear lady, and advanced to Roſella that ſhe might not loſe the opportunity of examining the ſtate of this private drawer. Delamere's note, which ſtill remained upon the floor, caught her attention, and picking it up, ſhe demanded, with a low courteſy, if ſhe ſhould get it changed.

"No, let it be," ſaid Roſella, rather peeviſhly.

"Yes, ſure," replied the dame, laying it obſequiouſly upon the table.

After receiving the amount of her little *memorandum*, without having it very minutely examined, ſhe crept on tiptoe to the bed-ſide, and with a variety of condolements and enquiries, thought for her part the poor dear lady ſhould hire a nurſe to tend upon her; for in her houſe, God knew, ſhe could not anſwer for her own mother

mother being well tended, without petickler looking after by ſome perſon whoſe buſineſs it was; and ſhe hoped the poor dear lady hadn't to complain of her folks, though, God knew, ſhe had enough to do to get 'em to mind her gueſts as they ought; but if ſhe found that any body in her houſe had a right to complain of them, they ſhould all troop at an hour's warning.

"Do you know any young perſon you could recommend to me as an attendant?" interrupted Miſs Beauclerc, who was now in hopes ſhe might procure a waiting damſel to ſuit her ideas.

"Yes, my Lady," replied the woman eagerly, "as luck will have it, I have a kinſwoman out of employ, who would be glad of ſuch a hap to help her on a bit; I'll ſend for her off hand: ſo now what would your Ladyſhip pleaſe to reliſh for your dinner? I can toſs up a white fricaſſee, or boil a chicken, or get a ſweetbread—and while it's dreſſing, your Ladyſhip had better have a crum of jelly to hearten you oop a bit—I've got both ſweet and ſavoury; and this poor dear ſweet young lady, as has tooked on ſo much—what would you pleaſe to have ſent oop for you, my dear—or wad ye pleaſe for to have your dinner in the peacock? It's a mooch more airier and lightſome room, and looks ſuch a fine perſpect on to the Jarmin oſhin!"

The dear ſweet young lady, whoſe diſguſt was rather increaſed than diminiſhed by this addreſs, replied that ſhe ſhould dine with her friend. "But I was told, not an hour back," continued Roſella, "that we could not have any thing but mutton chops for our dinner, becauſe there was nothing elſe in the houſe."

"Lord

" Lord bleſs your ſweet face, who could have told you ſuch a thing? But I know who it was —it was that curſed fellow Will waiter—he han't been ſober this week—he ſhall troop, pleaſe the pigs, for this imperence—and there's my huſband too, he's in his tantrums!—Ah, God help me, I'm well hoped oop wi'em all! Many's the time," continued ſhe, whimpering, " when I'am at my wit's end to keep things a going for other people's fagaries—yes ſure—I'm finely beſet!"

" Well, well," cried Miſs Beauclerc, who was very much fatigued with her inceſſant gabbling, " then you will ſpeak to your relation, and let me ſee her as ſoon as poſſible; and ſend up a chicken when you can get it ready."

My landlady, glad to eſcape ſo well from her dilemma, forget to urge her jellies any further, and decamped as faſt as ſhe decently could, with many courteſies and ſelf-congratulations.

The firſt care of Roſella after her exit, was to ſecrete the letter ſhe had begun writing to Mr. Mordaunt, and her next to ſecure Mr. Delamere's note, that ſhe might return it the firſt opportunity. She deliberated whether ſhe ſhould inform Miſs Beauclerc of the circumſtance, becauſe ſhe dreaded leſt ſome heroic extravagance ſhould retort the ſeeming inſult; but the expectation of being aſſiſted in ſome expedient to render Mr. Delamere ſenſible of the error he had adopted, and to put him again in poſſeſſion of his unwiſhed-for loan, determined the point, and ſhe at length acquired courage to rehearſe a ſcene which had given her ſuch acute mortification; but her diſinclination to communicate uneaſineſs and pain, induced her to ſoften any intimation that appeared to reflect with aſperity upon

upon the conduct, or the want of prudence in Miss Beauclerc, who listened with great attention to her relation, but expressed neither anger nor astonishment at it, merely dismissing the subject by saying she would think of a method to return the note as soon as possible.

CHAP. XIX.

A lapse of memory succeeded by an adventure.

THE attention and respect which Rosella and her friend now experienced from the people of the house, was a remarkable contrast to the negligence and impertinence they had endured only a few hours before: the bell was never suffered to ring twice; the landlady herself attended at the door several times during the dinner to receive and execute orders, and in the early part of the afternoon introduced her relation by the name of Nancy, to the invalid as a nurse. The mien and appearance of the girl indicated cleanliness, honesty, and simplicity; and Miss Beauclerc fancying she had found an attendant, such as she had in vain looked for at the commencement of her journey, retained her at the wages stipulated by the obsequious landlady, with a voluntary promise of further encouragement.

Rosella found her situation so much improved by this arrangement, and her friend, whose spirits were revived by proper attentions, treated her with so much affection and kindness, that she destroyed her half-written letter to Mr. Mordaunt

Mordaunt, and resigned herself to the destiny that awaited her, in spite of the admonitions of Delamere, whose note she had persuaded Miss Beauclerc to permit her to enclose in a blank cover addressed to him at Eideva Lodge, where she hoped he would meet with it—at any rate she was delighted that it was no longer in her possession, or that of her friend, as every moment that passed before she could get rid of it, added to her mortification.

Nancy, their new attendant, was found quiet, steady, and very assiduous, not only in obedience to the eternal admonitions of mine hostess, her aunt, who had been obliged to support her for a few months back, but in conformity to her own natural disposition :—and when Miss Beauclerc had fortunately finished her posthumous packet of juvenile adventures, the cares of Rosella and Nancy, and the prescriptions of the landlady and the good man she called her doctor, soon re-established her health.

The niece was consulted as to her inclination to continue with her mistress when she left Warkworth, and assented with great thankfulness, to the evident satisfaction of her aunt, whose little *merandums* being duly discharged, she accompanied her guests to the post-chaise that carried them away, in great sorrow, often applying her apron to her eyes, and protesting that she should not smile again till they coomed back, which Miss Beauclerc had promised to do, on her return to London, if Nancy altered her mind, and should wish to remain in the North.

They travelled the Berwick road to Edinburgh, in preference to the more inland one; and as Miss Beauclerc was not yet sufficiently strong to journey many miles without resting,

they remained in their route two or three hours at Belford, extremely gratified by a fine coaſt view on the Eaſt, and the Cheviot hills riſing to the Weſt. Nancy hearing her Lady repeat a few lines of the famous ballad that celebrates Chevy Chace, gave unaſked a very minute hiſtory of that eventful day, which every laſs in the county is perfectly well acquainted with, and even promiſed, in accents graced by a ſtrong Northumberland wharle, to ſhew the exact ſpot where the two chiefs were ſlain, if they ſhould travel near it.

The travellers reſted that night at Berwick-upon-Tweed, whoſe ſtream has been ſo ſweetly and ſo ſimply ſung; and Roſella found, with a pleaſure ſcarcely inferior to that of her romantic friend, that their ears were here ſaluted by accents and tones which conveyed to the mind the idea of that peculiar and national ſtyle of harmony ſhe enthuſiaſtically admired.

The next morning they ſet out for Edinburgh; and having paſſed Preſs-Inn rather early in the morning, which was dull and hazy, and ſeeing before them an extenſive dreary heath, without one object to intereſt curioſity, or excite approbation, Roſella, in ſpite of her extreme goodwill to be pleaſed and enchanted, felt a ſecret diſappointment on firſt treading Scottiſh ground: but as they arrived near Peas-bridge, the ſun burſt forth with uncommon ſplendor, and gilding its proud arches, as if to point out their lofty pre-eminence to the admiring traveller, gave to the deep glen beneath a bolder ſhade.

Miſs Beauclerc felt her imagination tower, as the ſcenes before her opened to her view. Already ſhe beheld Roſella the fair retiring heroine of ſome beautiful ſequeſtered ſpot never viſited by

by the inhabitants of the *vulgar great world*, ſave only by one diſtinguiſhing and diſtinguiſhed young gentleman of extraordinary merit and ſenſibility, who chances to viſit, for the purpoſe of hunting or ſhooting, the old caſtle belonging to his family, whoſe turrets, or white chimnies, or towers riſe above the ſurrounding wood, and form a delightful object for the gentle recluſe, as ſhe catches a glimpſe of them ſtanding at her caſement to gaze at the ſcenery by moonlight.

Certainly the powers of ſympathy muſt be ſmall indeed, if in ſuch a caſe they cannot draw the lady to the caſtle, or the lover to the cottage: however, ſhould they for the firſt time fail on ſo preſſing an occaſion, a never-wanting reſource, Miſs Beauclerc well recollected, is always ready in the Curate or Rector of the pariſh, who, in ſuch a charming place, muſt undoubtedly be full of ſentiment and ſighs, and therefore doomed to languiſh out the remainder of his exiſtence in a hopeleſs paſſion for the beautiful ſtranger, who, being decreed by Fate to reward the virtues of his patron, can never of courſe ſmile upon his hopes. The poor youth, in the fulneſs of his deſpair, talks of the paragon to my Lord, or Sir Edward (for the owner of the caſtle is always a titled being), and thus my Lord and the lovely recluſe become acquainted, which is an important point gained.

"This landſcape is ſweetly captivating!" exclaimed Roſella, turning to her friend, who involved in ſuch a comprehenſive reverie as that juſt deſcribed, appeared not to attend to the beauties which had given birth to it.—Collecting her ſcattered thoughts however, ſhe joined in the approbation Roſella expreſſed, but ſoon relapſed into the delight of caſtle building and

cottage building, and ſpoke very little till the varied ſcenery before her forcibly claimed her attention; nor would her delighted companion ſuffer it again to wander till they reached Dunbar.

It was rather late the next morning when they purſued their way to Edinburgh, where they arrived to an early dinner. Roſella, impatient to ſurvey the Scottiſh capital, eaſily prevailed upon Miſs Beauclerc to accompany her in a ramble through ſome of the ſtreets, and they were compelled to admit Nancy of their party, becauſe ſhe would not by any means be left alone in a ſtrange place, which, though they called it an inn, ſhe ſaid, was no more like her aunt's, than ſhe was like Miſs Montreſor.

The landlord offered to procure the ladies a conductor, when he underſtood their intention; but Miſs Beauclerc declined this courteſy, becauſe ſhe was convinced that a heroine might unfortunately miſs a number of pleaſant adventures by being in the leaſt protected, or having the appearance of being protected, and likewiſe by having only a tolerable knowledge of the path ſhe uſually wiſhed, and meant to purſue.

She announced her readineſs however, to accept his well-intentioned offer on the day following, as ſhe certainly much wiſhed to behold, amongſt other deſirable objects, the apartments at the Palace, where ſhe had lately read a beautiful young creature had been immured from the ardent gaze of her lovers, her only relaxation being compriſed in ſtealing glances at groupes of young men as they walked acroſs the Calton, whilſt ſhe was eternally employed in making caps and gowns after her own exquiſite taſte

taſte, to adorn the perſons of her envious cater couſins.

Miſs Beauclerc, after the example of many condeſcending heroines, not objecting to the company of her ſuivante, the whole party ſallied out to reconnoitre the outſide of the buildings in Edinburgh. Roſella was pleaſed with almoſt every thing that met her eye, becauſe every thing poſſeſſed the charm of novelty; but how much more was her friend delighted, when having ſtrolled about for ſome time, they found themſelves on the North Bridge, which divides the old town from the new. The wind happened to be rather high, and this circumſtance, joined to the ſpot ſhe ſtood upon, brought to her recollection the ſufferings of a diſtreſſed heroine, who, in wandering about, as many others are wont to do, without a place to reſt her beautiful head in, loſt her bonnet by a ſubaltern zephyr, which took up its ſtation in her lovely hair, and drove her, with as little ceremony as a huge grenadier with a fixed bayonet would have done, full tilt upon the pathetic adventure that of courſe enſued.

Yet notwithſtanding the ſublime ecſtacy of Miſs Beauclerc to find herſelf thus upon conſecrated ground, it was certainly not poſſible to remain on the Bridge the whole afternoon, and ſhe therefore agreed, at the requeſt of Roſella, to move forward, as unluckily no adventure appeared there to await her.

After having wandered about, near two hours, the wiſhes of all the party pointed to the hôtel where they had fixed their ſtation: but alas! neither Roſella, her friend, nor their attendant could recollect the name it was known by; nor had they even remarked the appellation of the ſtreet

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in which it was ſituated. Miſs Beauclerc ſecretly made light of the dilemma they were thus reduced to, as ſhe conceived that it had ſomething extremely pleaſant and romantic in it, and muſt furniſh ſome very intereſting ſcenes. She thought proper however, to conceal from her companions that ſhe had been in this reſpect more unpardonably thoughtleſs than themſelves, becauſe ſhe knew the abſurd timidity of Roſella's diſpoſition would lead her to tremble at the proſpect of the inconveniences it might entail upon them.

She proved how little it affected herſelf: for happening at that moment to catch a view of the Theatre, which was then open, ſhe informed her young companion that ſhe felt inclined to while away the evening, by ſeeing the performance. Charmed with her friend's intimation, ſhe eagerly ſeconded it; for it never entered the imagination of Roſella that the *incognita* ſtyle they would be compelled to uſe, from their undreſs, and want of a male attendant, might ſubject them to unpleaſant ſituations. She thought only of having experienced much ſatisfaction, when eſcorted by Mr. Beauclerc, and aſſiſted by his ſervants, ſhe had entered and quitted the London Theatres with facility and comfort.

Miſs Beauclerc was more acquainted with the diſtreſſes they might have to encounter, but was more diſpoſed to welcome than to fly from them; and with Roſella by her ſide, and Nancy following her very cloſely, ſhe penetrated, with ſome difficulty, to the ſecond tier of boxes, where ſhe obtained two ſeats in the front row. The ſuivante ſeated herſelf in the back-ground, perfectly ſatisfied with gazing ſtraight forward,

as

as she conceived the whole of the show to consist of fine folks sitting all of a row, with fine paintings and gildings about them, and a whole chandler's shop of candles over their heads.

The party remained unmolested until the latter acts of the piece, which happening to be a musical one, and very well performed, much interested the attention of Rosella:—but her friend began to feel indignant that so charming a young creature should fail to draw into first sight fetters all the men in Edinburgh, out of whom she might have selected the libertine lover, who is always brought forward in the picture to torment beautiful heroines, and is generally a Right Honorable profligate—secondly, the pathetic submissive lover—thirdly, the grave, fatherly, disinterested, generous, middle-aged lover, who, when the fair lady is in desperate distress, advances with a solemn mien, and offers his hand, which is of course refused, that the *denouement* may be *selon l'usage*.

"Insensible brutes!" softly ejaculated Miss Beauclerc, as she beheld several young men of distinguished appearance, either conversing indolently with each other, or paying court to mere fashionable looking women with handsome faces. "Insensible brutes! unable to taste the charms of innocence and sensibility, you are not worthy that it should be exposed to your observation!"

Her opinion was however rather mollified with respect to Scottish discrimination, when the box-door was opened by one of those young gentlemen who prefer the amusement of peeping into every part of the house, excepting indeed the stage when the curtain has risen, rather than attending to the performance. The intruder began his examination, by bestowing a glance

glance or two upon the countenance of Nancy, whose rural appearance arrested his observation; but his movements, with an accompaniment of alternate whistling and humming, in concert with the air an actor was then singing, drawing the eyes of Rosella towards him, his curiosity was satisfied with a view of her face, and his regards were instantly detached from Nancy, and fixed upon her.

Miss Beauclerc, in the interim, had taken the attitude and expression of a woe-worn matronly heroine pervaded with resignation, and the gazer turned towards her; but soon returned to his second object, who, from the moment of his unwished-for presence, began to reflect, with some disquietude, upon their unprotected situation.

When the curtain fell, the stranger, who had very patiently maintained his post, in defiance of the apparent disregard with which he was treated, listened to the conversation of his fair neighbours, and discovered, by their accent, that they were Englishwomen.

"I perceive, Madam," said he, addressing Miss Beauclerc, "that you are not of this country; and I suppose, by the observations I have had the honor of hearing, that you have not been long in Edinburgh."

The lady had sufficient fortitude to dissemble the pleasure she experienced at this opening, and assented with a mien of proper reserve. Happily however, the young man wanted no further encouragement to induce him to proceed; and having named to the stranger party, those of the actors who had never appeared on the London stage, he continued his remarks, by pointing out and characterizing every lady of distinction

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in the houſe, beginning by that eccentric Highland laſſie, Lady C—— ——.

Roſella liſtened to his obſervations, which were lively and amuſing, with ſome pleaſure; but it was mixed with a painful ſenſe of indecorum in thus encouraging the converſation of a perſon wholly unknown both to Miſs Beauclerc and herſelf: yet it was impoſſible that ſhe could put on the matron, and act the cenſor, where her friend, ſo much her ſenior in years, and her ſuperior, it might be imagined, in diſcretion, appeared not to contemn.

At length the after-piece ended, the curtain dropped, the audience began to depart, and the gentleman, with a politeneſs but little practiſed at preſent, offered his ſervices in any way the ladies would indicate, to aſſiſt their departure. Miſs Beauclerc thanked him for his attention, and condeſcended to acknowledge that ſhe had neither equipage nor ſervant in waiting, and would be under real obligation to him for procuring her a hackney carriage of any ſort.

"Moſt willingly," he replied; and taking his hat from the bench, inſtantly left the box.

In his abſence, which appeared uncommonly long, ſeveral gentlemen opened the box-door, and peeping in, took a very particular ſurvey of the party; and at length this unpleaſant ceremony was ſo often repeated, and ſometimes by the ſame perſons more than once, that it gave Roſella to ſuſpect their new acquaintance of being the cauſe of it, and ſhe urged her friend not to wait his return any further, as every paſſing minute rendered it leſs to be expected.

Miſs Beauclerc began to admit this opinion, and replied that ſhe would certainly leave the houſe, but that ſhe had forgotten the name and

ſituation of their hôtel, as well as herſelf and Nancy, and that ſhe had planned to have aſked information of the polite ſtranger, which ſhe hoped he would have been able to have afforded her, by learning the direction in which the poſt-boy had taken them on their entrance into the town from Haddington, and from hearing a few particulars, which ſhe fortunately recollected, of the appearance and neighbourhood of the houſe.

Roſella was much ſhocked at ſuch unwelcome intelligence, but preferred wandering about the ſtreets, wretched, forlorn, deſolate as they muſt be at ſuch an hour, and in ſuch circumſtances, to the mortification of confeſſing to a young man, whoſe character and ſituation in life they knew nothing of—nay, whoſe exiſtence they had been two hours back unacquainted with, that they had been guilty of an imprudence ſo unpardonable, that Roſella could not but perceive it would invite a freedom of deportment, which the very incident that rendered them liable to it, would prevent them from reſenting with any appearance of juſtice. She importuned Miſs Beauclerc therefore, to leave the place immediately; but the good lady was extremely averſe to giving up the perſpective of ſuch a charming adventure, as that of traverſing the whole town with the gentle youth Fortune had preſented to her, in ſearch of the houſe where ſhe had left her baggage, concerning which ſhe meant to be very ſincerely anxious, not ſo much for the apparel and valuables compriſed in it, but for a ſmall writing-caſe *of the utmoſt importance to herſelf, and the future welfare of thoſe moſt dear to her.*

Roſella was too earneſt however, to be denied, and continued urging her requeſt moſt ſtrenu-

ouſly

ously; whilst Nancy, who had comprehended their dilemma, now thought she should be obliged to stay in the show-room all night—a place which began to lose its charms very rapidly in her imagination, in proportion as the company vanished, and the servants of the Theatre put out the lights. One of these, approaching a lustre that hung very near the box, that he might extinguish it, she began bellowing with great violence; and when her Lady enquired her subject of complaint, "Lord help us!" exclaimed she, "we shall be left in pitch darkness in this lonesome place!"

"Be quiet, good Nancy!" said Rosella in an agony: "do, dear Madam, if you love me, let us go!"

Miss Beauclerc found herself unable to withstand this adjuration, which was almost accompanied by tears, and assisted by the fear of being shut into the Theatre, by the universal solitariness that reigned around.

Very much irritated against her apostate Esquire, she arose with dignity, and taking the arm of Rosella, marched forward, Nancy seizing fast by the train of her gown, which she supported with more care, though not with such graceful ease, as a page in a tragedy.

They met with little obstacle to their retreat, for almost every one had quitted the Theatre: but when they found themselves in the street, not knowing which turning to take, and unacquainted with any individual the place contained, even Miss Beauclerc felt embarrassed and uncomfortable; for she had not foreseen that her merit, and the charms of Rosella, would have been affronted by the indiscriminating neglect of every hero in Edinburgh.

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At length when her patience, and even her courage, were extremely exhauſted, ſhe perceived a ſtand of coaches, one of which ſhe gladly took poſſeſſion of: Roſella and Nancy, fatigued and diſpirited, followed her into it in ſilence.

"Drive me," ſaid Miſs Beauclerc, "to the hôtel—to—to a handſome hôtel in a ſpacious ſtreet near a ſquare."

"I dunna ken what ye wad ſpake of," "replied the coachman; "but I ſuppoſe ye wad gang tul F——'s."

"Yes, yes," returned the lady haſtily.

The man ſhut the door, and mounted his box; Roſella, eagerly putting out her head to reconnoitre, exclaimed, "This is not the place. The man has brought us to the wrong houſe!"

"Dinna ye tell me," retorted he, "to tak ye aw tul F———'s, maiſtreſs?"

At this moment a party of very ſprightly young gentlemen, either meaning to paſs the houſe, or to enter it, preſented themſelves at the coach-door, and looking into it with perfect eaſe and *nonchalance*, applauded the ladies for giving the direction, and the man for executing it.

"It is a miſtake!" exclaimed Miſs Beauclerc, who began to ſuſpect the predicament in which her imprudence had placed her.

"The de'el a ſtep did I tak but by y'er ain order," interpoſed the coachman; "ye told me to dreeve ye aw to a tavern, and F———'s is as gude as ony other."

"Oh better, better, ten to one," cried a gentleman opening the coach door, "come come, my laſſie, don't be in the pouts: if ſome ungrateful fellow has failed in his appointment,

here

here are we, ſent by heaven and St. Andrew to avenge his perfidy."

As he ſpoke, he took the hand of Roſella to aſſiſt her in alighting, who, too much diſtreſſed to utter a ſentence intelligibly, and unable entirely to reſiſt the motion that drew her forward, burſt into tears of terror and indignation.

"Gentlemen," exclaimed Miſs Beauclerc, who now thought it time to aſſert her dignity, "I beg you will not inſult us: we are ſtrangers here; and though appearances may perhaps authorize your miſtake of our character, you have certainly no power over our actions. Coachman, drive on!"

"And where wad ye gang noo?"

"Carry us to the place where you took us up."

The young men whiſpered to each other, whilſt the coachman, who diſplayed more complaiſance to their wiſhes, than to the orders he received from people who had declared themſelves ſtrangers, very patiently waited the reſult of the conference.

"No," replied one of the party aloud, "they are not worth it."

"Yes, by G—d," exclaimed another, who had gazed very earneſtly in the face of Roſella, "here is one worth ſighing for."

"This is inſupportable," cried Miſs Beauclerc, more offended by the careleſs manner in which this admiration was expreſſed, than flattered with the admiration itſelf:—"is this," continued ſhe in a lofty tone, "the beſt impreſſion of your politeneſs you chooſe to give to the ladies of South Britain who viſit your metropolis? Gentlemen (if you are ſuch), you will

ceaſe

ceaſe to moleſt us. Coachman, I again order you to drive on!"

Moſt of the party now retreated, ſome with contemptuous ſneers, and the others with loud laughs: the champion of Roſella's charms alone remained, when the recreant hero of the theatric adventure greeted the eyes of Miſs Beauclerc. He looked into the carriage, with ſome ſurpriſe, on hearing the latter part of her remonſtrance, and recognizing his *ci-devant* companions, demanded what was the matter. Miſs Beauclerc now thought proper to conſider him as a protector, and entreated that he would free her from the impertinence of her perſecutor.

"Do you ſpeak of this gentleman?" returned he, pointing to the offender; "he can only be conſidered in ſuch a light from miſapprehenſion: for he is too much a man of honor to inſult ladies of character."

"I hope ſo," interrupted the other in ſome confuſion; "but yet, Oberne, how is this?"

"I beg, Sir," ſaid Miſs Beauclerc, addreſſing the mediator, that I may have the honor of ſpeaking to you."

"Roſella was ready to ſink at this prelude, which foreboded ſome new humiliation; and turning her aching head from the light of two large lamps which illumined the door, reſted it on the ſhoulder of Nancy, who had fallen faſt aſleep the moment ſhe was ſeated in the coach, and had not been in the leaſt diſturbed by the noiſes that had enſued.—Oberne, as he had been called, now uttered ſomething in a low voice to the obſtinate intruder, who, without further heſiration, made his bows, and vaniſhed. Miſs Beauclerc, delighted with the conduct of her Eſquire, inſtantly informed him of the dilemma

dilemma ſhe had found herſelf in, from her want of thought; and Mr. Oberne, with little trouble, diſcovered, from her deſcription, the hôtel to which ſhe had been taken on her entrance into Edinburgh.

He accompanied her to it in the coach, to guard the party from further alarm or inconvenience; and during the ride, exculpated himſelf from the charge of deſerting them, by mentioning the difficulties he had encountered in his miſſion, and proteſting his extreme concern on finding, at his return to the box, that the ladies had quitted it.—Whether the excuſe were true or falſe, it was entirely credited by Miſs Beauclerc; and the gentleman, on bidding her adieu, had the ſatisfaction of receiving from her enthuſiaſtic gratitude, an invitation to breakfaſt with Roſella and herſelf the next morning.

The people of the houſe had not conceived the moſt favorable opinion of their ſouthern gueſts, from their unannounced abſence till ſo late an hour, and their return with a gay young man, though they had intimated very plainly that they were entirely unknown in the town; and they now found the acrimony of their ſuſpicions exceedingly increaſed, by the *ſlight refreſhment* which Miſs Beauclerc ordered upon the table which was ſpread for ſupper; in conformity with the invariable regimen of heroines, who take eſpecial care never to increaſe their delicate and nymph-like forms with too much good cheer: it being a maxim never departed from, that though a young, penſive, woe-worn, emaciated charmer may be reduced to a pale ſkeleton, and yet preſerve all the faſcination of beauty, and ſtill gain multitudes of enraptured lovers, yet no plump damſel can long "ſigh in ſhades

ſhades, and ſicken at the ſun," without becoming very bilious, and being threatened with a yellow or black jaundice. As it is therefore indiſpenſably neceſſary that heroines ſhould poſſeſs ſlender forms, the attention they give to ordering ſlight repaſts is extremely proper; but people who live and exiſt by the extravagance, gluttony, drunkenneſs, and epicuriſm of others, will not conſider this matter with an attention ſufficiently ſerious; and it is much to be feared that, like Miſs Beauclerc's Edinburgh landlord, others of the ſame ſtamp may annihilate, in wiſh at leaſt, ſuch taper-ſhaped gueſts, and in the fury of their wrath, curſe them limb by limb, and feature by feature. All that is to be hoped on ſuch an occaſion is, that the gentle ſouls may never attain any knowledge of ſuch barbarous and vulgar execration, and that the arms of their lovers may not undertake to avenge it, with juſt but relentleſs indignation.

CHAP. XIII.

A pleaſant travelling companion gained à bonne marchée.

IT was near one o'clock before Roſella experienced the comfort of laying her head upon the pillow: yet fatigued as ſhe was, ſhe found it impoſſible to obtain any repoſe. She felt mortified and degraded by the contempt and deriſion ſhe had been the object of; and though far from ſuſpecting the extent of the diſaſtrous circumſtance

cumſtance which had given riſe to the freedom and levity of manner the young men had adopted, ſhe could not but be ſenſible that in the ſituation to which her own forgetfulneſs, and the unpardonable want of caution of her chaperon had driven them, there was a ſufficient latitude for concluſions, not extremely favorable to women of any delicacy.

The facility with which Beauclerc had, by her breakfaſt invitation, given the ſtamp of an acquaintance to this Oberne, whoſe firſt appearance had not impreſſed Roſella with the beſt ſentiments of his manners or morals, ſhe ſecretly condemned; and reſolved, for the firſt time ſince the commencement of their tour, to contradict the wiſhes of Miſs Beauclerc, if they led her to requeſt her company in her intended viſit to the lions of Edinburgh; for ſhe dreaded to be ſeen and recognized by any of the party, the recollection of whoſe ſurmiſes ſhe fled from with horror; and feared that her precipitate friend would not find much reaſon to congratulate herſelf upon the acquiſition of an eſcort, picked up in the ſecond tier of boxes at the Theatre Royal.

In the morning a plea of indiſpoſition, which her languid appearance juſtified, procured her a diſpenſation from attending the breakfaſt table—a ceremony Miſs Beauclerc did not inſiſt upon, becauſe ſhe was not ſorry to have an opportunity of ſounding the ſentiments of Mr. Oberne towards the invalid, by the unlooked-for diſappointment of her abſence, and the touchſtone of eulogiums and obſervations upon her virtues and her beauties, uttered from the overflowings of the fondneſs they excited.

At ten o'clock, the hour appointed, Mr. Oberne announced the idea he entertained of the

the favor extended to him, by the punctuality of his attendance: but Rosella, the supposed object of attraction, was invisible. He looked earnestly towards the door every time a step was heard near it, and at length Miss Beauclerc condescended to relieve his cruel suspense, by a certainty equally afflicting: yet, contrary to her expectation, he learned the news of his fair one's indisposition, without turning pale, or droping his tea-cup.

Immediately after breakfast, Miss Beauclerc visited her sick companion, to propose an airing, which she thought would re-establish her health; and Rosella then heard that Mr. Oberne had very obligingly offered himself as their cicerone whilst they remained at Edinburgh. This sudden partiality to a young man wholly unknown to Miss Beauclerc, very much provoked Rosella, who felt an extreme antipathy to every object that could remind her of the misadventure of the preceding evening; and she excused herself from being of the party that morning, under pretext of a violent head-ach.

Miss Beauclerc would then have made her own apologies to the gentleman; but Rosella, fearing if the project were only deferred, she must at length be included in it, rather wished it to take place immediately, and pressed her whimsical friend so earnestly to leave her to the care of Nancy, who was attentive and obliging, that she at length complied, and suffered Mr. Oberne to look forward to the honor of a *tête-à-tête* during their intended ramble, which he might perhaps have declined, had he foreseen it.

Rosella, thus left to her reflexions, found them vexatious enough; and in spite of her early prejudices in favour of Miss Beauclerc, she

ſhe could no longer avoid confeſſing to herſelf, that her conduct was a tiſſue of eccentricities, and that if they continued to increaſe as they had done ſince the moment of their quitting London, Roſella herſelf might be irreparably injured in the opinion of that world ſhe was now only entering. Again did prudence ſuggeſt the meaſure of hinting her embarraſſment to Mr. Mordaunt, and once more the gratitude and affection Miſs Beauclerc had a right to challenge from her, oppoſed themſelves to its dictates, which were likewiſe weakened by the appearance of verſatility ſhe ſhould incur, by ſoliciting to be withdrawn from a ſituation, ſhe had entered into with eager and unequivocal delight.

With an uneaſineſs ſhe could not ſuppreſs, and a depreſſion of ſpirits ſhe could not ſurmount, ſhe met Miſs Beauclerc on her return from her excurſion. Mr. Oberne no longer accompanied her, and Roſella ſincerely hoped ſhe ſhould ſee him no more; but how great were her chagrin and diſappointment, when ſhe was informed that her friend had conſented he ſhould become their *compagnon du voyage* as far as Glaſgow! She felt wholly confounded and diſmayed, and received the intelligence with a ſilence ſufficiently expreſſive.

Miſs Beauclerc remarked it, and haſtily endeavored to remove any impreſſion her too eaſy compliance with this meaſure might produce, by aſſuring Roſella that Mr. Oberne had been addreſſed by many people of diſtinction during their excurſion, and had very politely introduced her to ſome women of rank they had met on their way to the Caſtle, as a lady of family with whom he had become acquainted in England.

" Mr.

"Mr. Oberne then," said Rosella gravely, "has no objection to deceive others into erroneous opinions, by uttering a deliberate falsehood."

"You should not view the effect of his good humour in such a light," returned Miss Beauclerc.—"Indeed he convinced me that he was better informed of some very interesting events than I had any suspicion of, by telling me he had several times heard my name mentioned at the table of Lord Morteyne, when he was in the South: so that his deception was an innocent one, as he was perfectly conscious I was really the character he represented me to be."

Rosella silently hoped the women of rank, to whom her friend had been so politely introduced, were of characters as essentially responsible; but as Miss Beauclerc had vindicated her new acquaintance rather warmly, she would not venture to give utterance to so offensive an intimation, and awaited what she meant further to say.

"I think I may affirm," continued the lady, "that he is a very estimable young man; but as our knowledge of each other commenced in a manner which some foolish people might cavil at, he would not scruple to follow the example of many worthy characters, and alter facts in a manner more favorable to the date and propriety of our friendship.—"For example," added she, willing to convince Rosella, whose disapprobation was still visibly expressed in her downcast looks, "in the charming new novel we lately read, did not a very amiable, honest, and moral man introduce a very lovely young stranger to his wife and daughters, as their niece and cousin? And though in fact she was such, as he was unacquainted with the truth of what he asserted, it was not the less a falsehood from his lips; and did

did not the same man, on discovering accidentally a very charming female neighbour, carry his daughters and their beautiful cousin there, and carry himself there, unknown to his wife, which morally would have been very improper, only that this wife, who was indeed rather in the way, was a mere handsome woman of the world, without the least pathos of the heroine in her disposition; and therefore certainly every lover of the sublime and beautiful, must have wished her any where but in the devotional apartment of the gentle recluse, when she was surprized by her antient admirer and her female pupils, with her grey tresses flowing, in her pathetic attitude, kneeling before her elegant crucifix and her Roman Catholic apparatus, so sweetly and fancifully disposed, and repeating in such silvery, yet fervent tones, her *confiteor* out of her gilt Latin office-book.—Can we," said Miss Beauclerc earnestly, "blame the good man for being, virtuous as he was, betrayed into a passionate sally of admiration? and can we wonder, that having conducted his young companions to their home, he should be impelled, by his sensibility, to return at midnight to the interesting solitary, that he might protect her from the thunder and lightning?"

Rosella, perceiving that her friend, in the ardor of her imagination, had strayed considerably from her argument, now took advantage of a pause, to observe that the incautious conduct of this amiable, honest, and moral man, had nearly been the occasion of sending the orphan he meant to serve, to the workhouse.

"Rosella," interrupted Miss Beauclerc hastily, "never let me again hear such a low expression

ſion—a grocer's heireſs could not have uttered that ſentence with more vulgar ſpite."

"Dear Madam," returned ſhe, almoſt laughing, "do you mean a grocer's heireſs in a novel, or a grocer's heireſs in Cheapſide?"

"There are many characters of that deſcription," ſaid Miſs Beauclerc very gravely, "which I conceive to be very well delineated in many modern works: their malice towards ſuperior beauty and amiable ſenſibility, their clumſy perſons, and pretences to accompliſhments, their immenſe bloated mamas, and ſheepiſh henpecked fathers——"

"And their needy Right Honorable lovers," interrupted Roſella gaily.—"Oh no doubt, the portrait is a good one, as it has been ſo often copied."

"You are quite ſilly to-day!" exclaimed Miſs Beauclerc; "but we will argue no further upon this or any other ſubject; for we have only time to put up ſuch things as are unpacked, and take ſome refreſhment, before the hour I have fixed upon to leave Edinburgh."

"I thought, Madam, ſaid Roſella, "that you had determined to remain here till you received letters from Mrs. Ellinger?"

"I have already received them, my dear," replied Miſs Beauclerc; "I called at the poſt-office, and found them waiting my arrival, owing to the punctual kindneſs of my poor Selina."

Roſella had indeed earneſtly wiſhed to quit Edinburgh from the moment of their unpleaſant adventure; but to leave it accompanied by a gay young man—ſo ſuddenly too! Her gleam of merriment quickly vaniſhed before the moſt unpleaſant reflections that had ever occurred; and ſhe

ſhe aſſiſted Nancy, in ſilence, to arrange their baggage.

After a repaſt as ſlight as that of the preceding evening, a poſt-chaiſe was ordered; and whilſt the requeſt was obeyed, Roſella ſat in a momentary expectation of the arrival of Mr. Oberne, ready booted for the journey; but to her great conſolation, he came not, and ſhe ſecretly hoped, as ſhe followed her imprudent friend into their hired carriage, that he had never intended to carry his gallantry and himſelf out of Edinburgh. Yet Miſs Beauclerc did not appear to feel the diſappointment, upon which ſhe made no comment. Indeed the converſation was extremely languid until they reached the end of the firſt ſtage, and there Roſella obſerved her to look round, as if for ſome perſon ſhe awaited; and the heart of her young companion beat quick, in the expectation that her preſent diſappointment would teach her future caution: but at the moment their driver was mounting to leave the inn-yard, ſhe obſerved another hack-chaiſe drive furiouſly into it, and almoſt inſtantly, the voice of Mr. Oberne enquired if Miſs Montreſor had recovered from her indiſpoſition.

The cheek of Roſella varied as ſhe returned an anſwer of cold civility to the compliment, and their departure then relieved her from her embarraſſment.

They continued to journey thus—the ladies in one chaiſe, and their knight-errant in another, merely exchanging a few ſentences at each ſtage, until they entered the town of Airdrie, where Miſs Beauclerc, finding herſelf fatigued, reſolved to reſt for the night. Roſella was more chagrined than ſurprized to obſerve than Mr. Oberne took his ſupper with them *en famille*, and likewiſe

wife repoſed his weary limbs at Airdrie; that he addreſſed her with the freedom of an acquaintance of long ſtanding, invariably ſtiling her his charming fellow-traveller; and that he treated Miſs Beauclerc as if ſhe had had the honour of being his ſiſter or aunt. She learned too, from his unreſerved communication, that he was of Ireland, but that he had many connexions and friends in England. The latter part of the intelligence was the leaſt welcome to Roſella, who did not feel at all ambitious of having the fame of her charms and adventures travel to the South, through the medium of Mr. Oberne.

The whole party entered Glaſgow the next morning to breakfaſt; and Roſella would have beheld this charming city with unqualified ſatisfaction, had not the ſociety of their new companion damped every pleaſurable ſenſation: he affected to attend to their accommodations, regulated the diſpoſal of their time whilſt they remained at Glaſgow, planned ſeveral excurſions in the neighbourhood, and finally ſpoke with anticipated rapture of their intended tour to Loch Lomond.

The remainder of the day was paſſed in viewing the beauties of the place: the noble bridges over the Clyde, the Guildhall, the Tolbooth, the Univerſity, and the Cathedral divided into ſtories or diſtinct tiers, each forming a ſeparate place of worſhip: nay, even the houſes in the principal ſtreets almoſt univerſally ſupported by Doric columns, forming an arcade into which the ſhops open—every thing was a ſubject of admiration and amuſement.

In the evening Miſs Beauclerc and Roſella repoſed, that they might ſet out with renewed ſpirits the next morning to viſit the ruins of Bothwell

Bothwell Caſtle, and ſee the falls of the Clyde. Mr. Oberne endeavored to render the dulneſs of an evening paſſed at at inn leſs obſervable, by ſometimes reading, and breaking the lecture occaſionally with obſervations, enlivened by extreme vivacity of manner and idea, and tinctured with diſcrimination.

Roſella was amuſed in ſpite of the prudence and reflection of nearly eighteen years' reſidence in this ſage and unerring world;—and, in the gaiety of the moment, forgot the impropriety of encouraging the lively ſallies of their unknown aſſociate. Unchecked by the dictates of wiſdom ſuperior to her own, ſhe loſt ſight, for a moment, of the reſtrictions her native good ſenſe had impoſed, and before they parted for the night, ſhe had laughed at the giddy flights of Oberne, had been evidently pleaſed at his good-humoured efforts to ſhorten the "tedious hours," and had even liſtened to the utterance of his extravagant and half-burleſqued ſentiments of eternal devotion to her charms, without any idea of ſerious diſpleaſure.

Reflection returned however, with darkneſs and the pillow: ſhe then regretted that ſhe had not maintained her reſerve, but was convinced that ſhe could not return to it with any appearance of conſiſtency; and much againſt her more rigid plans, now felt the neceſſity of continuing towards her new acquaintance, an unconſtrained deportment, which, without applauding, ſeemed not either to cenſure.

This did not reſemble the never receding, never-faltering dignity of a majeſtic heroine, who preſerves, without ceaſing, a proper diſtance towards the preſumptuous man whom ſhe ſuſpects to have become the ſlave of her charms.

Alas! no, not in the leaſt; but it was extremely natural that a young woman of an amiable and lively temper ſhould forget her ſage reſolutions in a fit of laughter, and approve than winning ſuavity in others, which Nature had abundantly beſtowed upon herſelf.

The following day beheld Miſs Beauclerc, Roſella, and Mr. Oberne on their way to Bothwell. Nancy was, with ſome difficulty, prevailed upon to remain at Glaſgow, and one chaiſe therefore contained the party, who were not quite ſo well pleaſed with each other as on the preceding evening. The young Iriſhman, rather mortified to obſerve that his renewed devoirs were not ſo welcome as he had perhaps flattered himſelf with, turned from Roſella to addreſs an invocation to the Naiades of the Clyde, whoſe charming banks, delightfully wooded, greeted his view. But his theme was again almoſt as ſuddenly changed, to one which the name of the place they were viſiting gave riſe to; and he lamented, with great gallantry, the luckleſs deſtiny of the Scottiſh Mary, over whoſe admitted faults he caſt the veil of oblivion.

Miſs Beauclerc, whoſe divine ſympathy was awakened by his expreſſions of compaſſion, almoſt wept the cruel clouds which had gloomed the gay thoughtleſs hours of a "fair young wanton lady," who, gifted by Nature with eminence of wit and beauty, and by Fortune with a plenitude of power, loſt this double empire over mankind, becauſe over herſelf ſhe had none!—a leſſon which ſhould be reverenced, not regretted.—Though Roſella's tribute of pity was ever ready, upon the ſlighteſt demand of ſuffering humanity, yet upon a ſubject where her judgment combated the compaſſion ſhe could

could not avoid feeling, she chose to remain silent; and their arrival at Bothwell Castle put an end to the subject.

Miss Beauclerc eagerly ascended one of the turrets Time has spared of this building, "once how honored!" and though she had, in her progress, not made any discovery of sliding pannels and stalking visions, which perhaps she might have expected, yet she was rewarded for her trouble more rationally, by a captivating view of the country round. Mr. Oberne pointed out on one side, Ben Lomond rearing its lofty head, and the opposing landscape enriched by the majestic falls of the Clyde, and the wild mountains of Lanerk.

Rosella had not been persuaded to leave *terra firma*; and her friend, charmed with the improvements in the scenery her elevation afforded, called to her from the height she had attained, and bade her follow the example she had given.—"I wish most sincerely," thought Rosella, "that I might, in every respect, do so with security!"

Oberne had hastily descended to assist her in obeying the summons, but forgot his errand by the way, and seemed perfectly contented to wander by her side amidst the ruins below, whilst he expatiated with much eloquence upon the charms of solitude and contemplation.

Miss Beauclerc meantime was still perched in her turret, like a certain heroine, of whom it was said that she was beautiful, and dignified, and virtuous, notwithstanding she was the housekeeper's niece, and was wont to meet the young heir clandestinely at midnight, whilst the rest of the family were wrapped in soft repose: but this history did not at present occupy the

imagination of the lady in the turret at Bothwell, though she had sunk into a reverie, and was mentally drawing a hasty sketch of a sweet pensive young creature, confined by a cruel tyrant of a mother-in-law, or a father, or a barbarous uncle, in one of the deserted towers of an immense castle, where the sounds of revelry, and dance, and song perpetually assail her solitary ears from the banqueting-rooms below, where no doubt but some of the guests sigh, in the centre of conviviality, for her hapless fate and matchless charms, and meditate in which of the endless corridors they may watch, to enjoy a momentary conversation, when she steals out of her apartment to procure more oil to recruit her expiring lamp, or else to entreat her negligent attendant to bring a faggot for her declining fire—two things a heroine is always particularly anxious about, though she will fast *ad infinitum*, without repining.

Whilst the imagination of Miss Beauclerc was thus occupied, she thought not of her absent companions, and would probably have remained in her present situation, until the interesting moon had risen to illumine the scenery around her, but that Rosella, embarrassed by the assiduous attentions of Mr. Oberne, sent him to inform her that the circling hours were not standing still.

Very reluctantly Miss Beauclerc left Bothwell Castle, to proceed to a celebrated Palace, and if possible, to approach the falls of the Clyde before the day was too far advanced.

On entering the extensive park in which the mansion is situated, Miss Beauclerc, catching a sight of the building, immediately assimilated it in idea to that imaginary, sweet, retired, yet magnificent

magnificent place in Wales, belonging to a young Nobleman, whose destined love, as she had read, having fled from an atrocious persecuting admirer, takes refuge by the instructions of her papa, exactly within the precincts of the hero's domains, at the cottage of her nurse, which her mama had ornamented according to custom (when she had fled to it likewise in *her* youth) with shelves for books, neatly papered the walls, and it may be supposed had even left an old lute in them; in this delightful place the heroine forgets not of course the amusement of *wandering* over the apartments at the great house, and dismantling the library of its books—a thing generally preferred to the vulgar care of looking over an heroic wardrobe, and repairing the occasional damage it may have sustained, in spite of sublimity.

Mr. Oberne and Rosella were, *en attendant*, conversing with some vivacity upon the custom of the Scottish and Irish Nobles, of almost wholly deserting their estates, and spending their time and their revenues in the metropolis of England; but the gentleman, who had himself often been seduced into imprudence by the allurements of fashion, could but feebly censure what he could not nevertheless excuse. Yet whilst Rosella expressed her astonishment that any place, such as she then beheld, could be abandoned for any length of time—"Abandoned for what?" thought Oberne; "to mix with the Nobles of a nation, who may reflect with secret pride, that the ancient Barons of this country once maintained the independence of their own crown, now a secondary jewel in that of England, from whose favour they solicit a Barony on the other side of the Tweed, that they may mingle

mingle in the legiſlature, by an inferior title, with the more modern and baſtard deſcendants of the houſe of Stuart, from which ſome Scots Nobles claim an honorable lineage."

However theſe ideas, which were perhaps the miſtaken reſult of prejudice, he choſe to condemn to ſilence, and undertook to vindicate a few North Britons by imputing their conduct to that prudent reſerve, which we are told certain Monarchs maintain, of ſhowing themſelves ſeldom, that they may preſerve the reſpect of their ſubjects.

" For example," continued Oberne, " ſuppoſe the ennobled owner of this or any other place ſhould prove unworthy of the honors to which he was born—a circumſtance," ſaid he with a ſmile, " I grant, very improbable—and loſing ſight of that reſpect which the eſtabliſhed cuſtoms of ſociety demand, bring the partner of his vices to the palace of his anceſtors, to ſully with brutal degeneracy the ſpot where their bones repoſe—would not this be the higheſt impolicy, as well as immorality, when from the metropolis of England, the ſame faults and follies, were they to be committed, would be borne to the ears of tenants and vaſſals with a ſoftened report, and not ſtrike like the ſulphureous bolt, falling viſibly in the midſt of them, with an effect no loyalty or attachment can withſtand ?"

" You think it better then," ſaid Roſella, " that tenants and veſſals ſhould have to complain of the poverty which the deſertion of the Nobles produces, than that they ſhould feel the influence of a bad example over their principles and conduct ?"

" What is that ?" enquired Miſs Beaucleric, awaking from her reverie.

Oberne

Oberne repeated the purport of what he had advanced, and the obſervations which had given riſe to the converſation.

"I do not agree with you," returned Miſs Beauclerc, "in your ideas of London reſidence: what can be more odious than the manners of our faſhionable Engliſhmen? How much more amiable and ſimple would the young men of the preſent age be, if they were to reſide more upon their remote eſtates, brought up by ſome charming old parſon, the friend of the family, whoſe daughter, or niece, or ſome beautiful dependant couſin, might then engroſs the ſuſceptible heart of the youth, and form by the oppoſition of parents and relations, a delightful ſeries of intereſting memoirs."

Roſella, who had never before known her friend to make ſo violent an excurſion upon her hobby-horſe in the preſence of Oberne, colored up to the ears, and gazed for ſome time without ceaſing upon the little river Avon, which was meandering before her eyes. "This man," thought ſhe, "will fancy that he is expected to be ſo amiably ſimple as to fall in love with me; and no doubt he miſtakes me for the dependant couſin, who will thankfully accept any ſuſceptible heart that offers."

"This ſpot is indeed ſo charming," ſaid Mr. Oberne, whoſe eyes followed the direction of her's, "that I cannot wonder my dear little fellow-traveller is ſo much occupied in admiring it, as not to have heard my enquiry."

"His dear little fellow-traveller!" repeated Roſella internally, and very much provoked at his freedom; for though Oberne had uttered the expreſſion twenty times before, it had never ſounded ſo very impertinent as at that moment.

"I wiſh

"I wiſh to know," added he, "if your ſentiments coincide with mine—if you imagine that it is poſſible for any man to be proof againſt the united beauties of perſon and mind in a charming young woman, though ſhe may happen to be in a ſubordinate ſituation, merely becauſe ſhe is ſeen in the metropolis?"

"Yes," interrupted Miſs Beauclerc eagerly; "and the reaſon is, that it is ſuppoſed ſhe has not virtue enough to be proof againſt the united charms of idleneſs and luxury, whenever any man may think proper to offer them to her acceptance. However the young gentlemen will not give themſelves the trouble to make the trial; and therefore it is, that the ſcenes of a modern novel cannot, if they are intereſting, be laid in the metropolis; becauſe it is no longer poſſible to imagine my Lord or Sir George running mad for an *innocent* beauty who appears at the public ſpectacles, or even when ſhe is introduced into the circles they frequent; ſo that our popular writers have had recourſe, and with great juſtice of idea, to the moſt remote parts of the kingdoms, for their ſcenes of eternal and diſintereſted attachment; many have croſſed the channel for their perſonages, their plots, their caſtles, and their mountains, and with good effect, whilſt others have been compelled to open the graves of heroes and heroines who had been ſleeping quietly three or four hundred years. And really," continued Miſs Beauclerc, in a tone of melancholy, "it was full time to remove all intereſting adventures from London and its neighbourhood; ſince the air of St. James's Street cannot be more peſtilential to virtue, than ſuffocating to every breath of tenderneſs and ſenſibility."

Oberne,

Oberne, notwithſtanding his utmoſt efforts, could not avoid ſmiling at this explanation; and Roſella, whoſe cheeks were dyed with bluſhes of vexation, obſerving that the poſtboy had now let down the ſtep, jumped out of the chaiſe before he could offer his aſſiſtance, and haſtened towards the auguſt manſion they had rode thus far to ſee, that ſhe might not be tortured by hearing any further lamentation upon the woeful decline of ſentiment in the men of the preſent age. Fortunately however, whatever more of the ſublime offered itſelf to the recollection of Miſs Beauclerc, ſhe enjoyed in ſilence; yet Roſella was in continual dread, leſt many objects which paſſed in review, ſhould revive heroic ſubjects; and much as her admiration had been excited, ſhe was pleaſed when they quitted the place.

CHAP. XXI.

A diſaſter—ſymptoms of attachment.

IN the town of Hamilton they took ſome refreſhment, and then proceeded to view the falls of the Clyde. Roſella was ſilent and rather dejected; and Miſs Beauclerc thoughtfully revolved the numberleſs charming incidents that might accrue to a young adventurer by being ſituated near Hamilton, or any other magnificent ſeat, where ſhe might *wander* into the park, and *wander* into the ſuperb gallery to view the pictures, or into the library to read the books,

whenever ſhe put on a new hat, or received a becoming and ſimple faſhion from her female confidante.

In vain did Oberne endeavour to enliven either the one or the other; he could obtain little more than monoſyllables in reply to his obſervations, and at length gave way to the prevailing ſyſtem, and was ſilent.

Within a ſmall diſtance of Lanerk the chaiſe, which was not in the beſt condition, being more than ordinarily ſhaken by the roughneſs of the road, by ſome ſudden failure of the machinery, overturned with violence on the ſide where Miſs Beauclerc ſat: unfortunately they were deſcending a hill, and the driver, in trying to ſtop his horſes, fell with the animal on which he rode, and appeared unable to aſſiſt himſelf, or even to riſe.

It was ſome minutes before Mr. Oberne could ſucceed in diſengaging himſelf from the ſhattered carriage, from the fear of injuring his companions in the attempt: he then drew Roſella out of the window, for in his trepidation he could not immediately open the door, and ſeeing her as pale as death, earneſtly enquired if ſhe were hurt.

"No, no," returned ſhe faintly, "go and aſſiſt Miſs Beauclerc."

"Tell me firſt that you are not ſeriouſly hurt," repeated he.

"I am quite ſafe," replied Roſella;—"pray go!"

He then flew back to the chaiſe, which he could now contrive to open, and was much ſhocked to behold Miſs Beauclerc lying ſenſeleſs on the ſide next the ground. With ſome difficulty

culty he raiſed her, and with ſtill more, lifted her from the fatal carriage.

" She is dead!" exclaimed Roſella wildly, " ſhe is dead!"

Oberne thought ſo likewiſe; but unwilling to confirm her alarm, he aſſerted that ſhe had only fainted.

" No, ſhe is dead!" repeated Roſella mournfully.

A groan from the unfortunate poſtboy increaſed her horror, yet ſhe endeavoured, though almoſt without a hope, to revive her friend: all her early kindneſs, her unſhaken attachment, and maternal indulgence crowded to the recollection of Roſella, and ſhe viewed herſelf with abhorrence for having ſuffered, what ſhe now thought a ſlight vexation, to create a diſguſt however tranſient, againſt ſo tried, ſo ſincere a benefactreſs.—Oberne aſſiſted in rubbing Miſs Beauclerc's lifeleſs hands, whilſt Roſella chafed her temples, and applied ſalts to her noſe. After a melancholy interval, ſhe exhibited ſigns of returning life, and at length opening her eyes, aſked, in a languid voice, for Roſella.

" Our dear little friend is ſafe," replied Oberne; " but ſhe has been dreadfully alarmed for you."

" I fear you are much hurt," ſaid Roſella tenderly: " what can I do, dear Miſs Beauclerc, to relieve you?"

" I think my arm is broken," returned ſhe: " it pains me very much; but perhaps I am miſtaken."

" What can be done?" exclaimed Roſella, applying to Oberne for his opinion.

" It cannot be long ſurely, before we are aſſiſted by paſſengers," replied he: " we will then

then ſend to Lanerk for the eaſieſt conveyance to carry Miſs Beauclerc thither."

Roſella then ſupported her luckleſs friend as well as ſhe was able, whilſt he examined into the ſituation of the poſtboy, who had received a contuſion on the head, and had been quite ſtunned by the fall. Oberne gave him every aid he could: and when the lad was tolerably recovered, returned to aſſiſt Roſella; for Miſs Beauclerc was quite helpleſs, and leant her whole weight againſt her, ſo that it was with the utmoſt exertion ſhe could prevent her from falling to the ground.

In a ſhort time however, he was relieved from his painful embarraſſment, by the approach of a returning chaiſe, which was driving towards Lanerk; and Oberne ſecured it, in the hope that Miſs Beauclerc might be able to endure the motion for ſo ſhort a way.

Aſſiſted by the poſtboy juſt arrived, he put her into the carriage, though not without indications of agony on her part, that wounded the heart of Roſella, who endeavored, by her cares, to ſoften the jolting, which even the footpace they went, produced. Their own driver could not be prevailed upon to leave his horſes, and Oberne promiſed to ſend him aſſiſtance from Lanerk, where they arrived in rather more than half an hour.

Miſs Beauclerc was taken to the beſt inn the place afforded, and a ſurgeon ſent for by Oberne, who had made many vain efforts to keep up the ſpirits of Roſella: at her requeſt, he likewiſe ſent off an expreſs to Glaſgow for Nancy, and enlarged upon the commiſſion, by deſiring the immediate attendance of a profeſſional man from that place.

Roſella

Roſella was ſoon relieved from the poignancy of her anxiety, by being aſſured that her friend, though much bruiſed, was not in any danger; and the next morning, the Glaſgow ſurgeon confirmed the report that no bone was broken, and that the patient would do well.

The attendance of Nancy preſerved her from the fatigue ſhe would otherwiſe have willingly encountered, though ſhe ſtill inſiſted upon watching half the night, and paſſed almoſt the whole day in the chamber of the ſufferer. She remembered, with gratitude, the friendly attentions of Oberne, which had been of ſuch real ſervice, and ſtill received thoſe he invariably continued to offer, with complacency: but as this was not a moment to indulge his careleſs gaiety, which he had had the art of communicating, in ſome meaſure, to his fair aſſociates, it could no longer operate to blind her judgment when reflection aſſailed her; and ſhe could not think, without an uneaſineſs blended with ſurpriſe, that this man, not many days ſince an entire ſtranger to them, ſhould now appear ſo completely to think himſelf of their party, that without very apparent preſumption, he ſhould quietly ſtation himſelf in the ſame houſe, eſtabliſh himſelf in a manner their major-domo, and not ſeem to have any buſineſs or plan but that which related to them.

It was in vain, ſhe well knew, to repreſent theſe circumſtances to Miſs Beauclerc, nor indeed did ſhe wiſh, at ſuch a moment, to attempt either complaint or argument: but as Mr. Oberne appeared extremely good-humoured, and not deaf to perſuaſion, ſhe endeavored to gain ſufficient courage to hint to him that it was evident her friend would not for ſome time be in a ſituation

ſituation to continue the excurſion ſhe had planned, and ſhe was certain it was not her wiſh to detain him in a place ſo little calculated to afford either accommodation or amuſement. Yet as Roſella was conſcious this would ſound like a diſmiſſion, ſhe ſaw Mr. Oberne twice before ſhe could prevail upon herſelf to give it utterance; and he, *en attendant*, was indefatigable in procuring ſome luxuries and many conveniences which Lanerk was unable to produce. He had ſent for quite a little library from Glaſgow, and every other day, Nancy brought up a quantity of flowers and fruit for Miſs Montreſor, which thus early in the ſeaſon muſt have been purchaſed at a conſiderable expence.

Theſe aſſiduous attentions, whilſt they pained her extremely, rendered her the leſs able to execute her prudent intention; till, finding that ſhe could not for a moment quit Miſs Beauclerc's chamber without meeting him in the paſſage or on the ſtairs, where he actually appeared to have taken up his ſtation, and that he never ſuffered her to return without a converſation of ſome length, ſhe felt the neceſſity of adhering to her reſolution.

The next time he accoſted her, ſhe permitted him to conduct her to a ſitting-room within view of the ſtairs, which he had on that account appropriated to his own uſe; and this apparent mark of favor heightened the uſual animation of his countenance.

"They have ſent me the Airſhire Bard," cried he, taking up ſome books which lay upon the table: "perhaps our poor invalid may like to hear his ruſtic lays. I ſhould wiſh to liſten to them too, from thoſe lips; but I ſuppoſe I muſt try to content myſelf as hitherto, with a diſtant vibration

vibration of that ſweet voice, when Nancy happens to open the door."

Roſella, taking no notice of his ſuppoſition, thanked him for the offered loan of the books, which ſhe had in his preſence inadvertently expreſſed a wiſh to read; but told him that he had already ſent to Miſs Beauclerc's apartment, many more than ſhe ſhould have time to look over, whilſt ſhe imagined he would remain at Lanerk.

"Our friend is not able to remove yet?" aſked he haſtily.

"No, replied Roſella.

"Then why do you think I ſhall quit Lanerk?"

"I only ſuppoſed," ſaid ſhe, in ſome confuſion, and almoſt forgetting the argument ſhe had meant to urge, "that as Miſs Beauclerc cannot continue the excurſion to Loch Lomond, which I underſtood it was your intention to make, and as ſhe is not ſufficiently recovered to quit her apartment, I thought you would—that is, I believe it is not proper for me——"

"What!" interrupted he, "not even to ſpeak to me *en paſſent!* Have I ever preſumed to intrude upon you for a moment, or utter a ſentence, but when I had the good fortune to meet with you accidentally?"

"No, certainly," replied Roſella, bluſhing; "but I——"

"Oh fie!" exclaimed he, ſmiling, "you think me ſuch a St. James's-ſtreet fellow as to fly from friends who have diſtinguiſhed me with ſo much condeſcenſion, becauſe an unfortunate caſualty has diſabled them from immediately fulfilling intentions kindly formed."

"I

"I am ſerious, Mr. Oberne," ſaid Roſella with conſiderable vexation.

"And ſo am I," returned he, "when I affirm that I will not quit Lanerk till Miſs Beauclerc is able to travel."

An idea now occurred to Roſella, that he was attaching himſelf to her friend with a deſign to marry her; and ſhe immediately deſiſted from her intention of endeavoring to perſuade him to a retreat, which, in ſuch a caſe, would have the ſemblance both of vanity and impertinence; and coolly telling him he was certainly at liberty to act as he thought proper, left the room.

"Will you not take theſe poems with you?" demanded he, following her with the books in his hand.

"I will enquire if Miſs Beauclerc wiſhes to ſee them," returned Roſella, "and Nancy ſhall inform you."

"You took a turn in the garden yeſterday," he reſumed, whilſt he detained her, "will you not repeat your walk to-day?"

"No, I believe not."

She then ran up the ſtairs; and though he ſaid ſomething further, ſhe ſtaid not either to liſten or reply to him.

Miſs Beauclerc, having no inclination at that moment to read the rural ſtrains of poor Burn, Roſella, as ſhe had promiſed, ſent Nancy with the information, who re-appeared with a large bouquet of green-houſe flowers for Miſs Montreſor. She was chagrined; but as ſhe could not return them, ſhe made her friend participate in the preſent.

From the time ſhe ſurmiſed that Mr. Oberne's more ſerious gallantry was directed towards Miſs

Miſs Beauclerc, many circumſtances ſtruck upon her memory which ſeemed to authoriſe the ſuppoſition; and ſhe was aſtoniſhed that ſhe had ſo long been blind to ſo palpable a fact. She had read of Iriſh fortune-hunters, their undaunted aſſurance, and extreme perſeverance, and it was now ſcarcely a matter of doubt in her mind, that Mr. Oberne was one of theſe; and his attentions to herſelf, ſhe ſuppoſed, were directed with a deſign to facilitate his views, by gaining all the intereſt ſhe might be imagined to poſſeſs over her friend. She reſolved however, to ſee him as little as poſſible, and confined herſelf for two days almoſt wholly to Miſs Beauclerc's apartment.

Mr. Oberne, who had not expected ſo perfect a ſecluſion, at length ſent a note to the invalid, where after many entreaties to command his ſervices, and employ him in any way conducive to her eaſe, he expreſſed a fear that her amiable Roſella would injure her health, by refuſing herſelf from day to day a moment of air and exerciſe. Miſs Beauclerc had already remonſtrated with her upon the ſubject, and now more earneſtly repeated her wiſhes that ſhe would pay a proper attention to herſelf, and allot ſome part of the time ſhe had hitherto too aſſiduouſly dedicated to the alleviation of her pain, to the preſervation of her own ſpirits and health.

Roſella was, however, ſo much provoked with the officious interpoſition of Oberne, that ſhe made a pretext of a trifling cold ſhe had caught, to diſappoint his intentions; and in ſpite of the exhortations of her anxious friend, paſſed two days more without allowing him an opportunity of ſpeaking to her.

On the third morning Nancy brought intelligence that Mr. Oberne was going to Glaſgow, and begged Miſs Montreſor would permit him the honor of ſeeing her for a moment before his departure.

"By all means," ſaid Miſs Beauclerc, on hearing the meſſage; "convey my acknowledgments to him, my dear Roſella, for his many attentions and ſolicitude for our welfare; and tell him, as I ſuppoſe it is not in his power to wait my entire recovery, to accompany us to Loch Lomond, I beg he will ſend me word if he remains any time in Scotland, where I may perſonally thank him for his brotherly kindneſs."

Shocked at the idea of being compelled to ſolicit an appointment, Roſella moſt unwillingly deſcended the ſtairs, and preceded by Nancy, who announced her approach, entered the room where ſhe had laſt ſeen Oberne, He ſtarted up to welcome her; and Nancy having diſappeared, he began a very ſerious complaint againſt her extreme reſerve, in withdrawing herſelf from thoſe momentary interviews, in which he had ever been particularly careful to avoid giving any reaſonable offence to her delicacy.

"However," continued he, "ſince you have completely ſtarved me out, I ſhall obey the intimation you have ſo dexterouſly given me, and leave Lanerk; but as I am thus compelled to a retreat, I confeſs I wiſh I had retreated with a better grace."

"I imagine," returned Roſella with a diſengaged air, "that you are quite ſatisfied with the ſample you have had of the attractions of this magnificent place, and that *ennui* has at leaſt an equal ſhare with what you call my intimation;

mation; which was given, I think, ſix days back."

"You are miſtaken," interrupted he; "and I ſhould convince you that I have at leaſt as much perſeverance as yourſelf, but that I fear your exceſſive punctilio will make you *really* ill, as well as deprive you of thoſe little airings you occaſionally took, before you thought proper to give me my *congé*."

"I have certainly no right to aſſume ſuch a power over any perſon Miſs Beauclerc chooſes to honor with her acquaintance," ſaid Roſella more gravely; "at the ſame time, I may ſurely adapt my conduct to my own ideas of propriety, when my friend is unable to direct it."

"Do not let us quarrel, my dear Miſs Montreſor!" exclaimed Oberne, taking her hand. "Will you have the goodneſs to inform Miſs Beauclerc, that as I ſhall be equally happy to be of the leaſt ſervice to her at Glaſgow, as at this place, I will paſs three or four days there; and I hope ſhe will conſider me as her factor, and employ me to execute her commiſſions. And tell her I ſhall wait with much impatience for the news of her complete recovery, which I ſhall conſider as a recal to Lanerk, and a pleaſing intimation that ſhe has not repented her intention of admitting me in her party to Loch Lomond."

Roſella replied that ſhe would repeat what he ſaid.

"Well then," reſumed he, "I muſt bid you adieu.—You do not wear," he added, "your uſual aſpect; and faith, if the truth were known, I believe I have much more reaſon to look grave."

"I ſuppoſe that chaiſe is for you," interrupted Roſella: "I will therefore bid you good morning,

morning, and report your meſſage."

"The chaiſe can wait," ſaid he impatiently; "you are in a violent hurry to diſpatch me!"

"I thought you had uttered your farewell," returned ſhe; "but my returning to Miſs Beauclerc need not precipitate your departure, if you have not ſufficiently arranged it."

She then repeated her parting compliment, and retired; and in a few moments Oberne left the inn, and Roſella very ſtrictly performed her promiſe of delivering almoſt *verbatim* his meſſage to her friend, who received it with a pleaſure ſo very apparent, that Roſella believed the ſucceſs of the ſuppoſed admirer indubitable;—and the idea was fully confirmed, when Miſs Beauclerc the next day employed her to continue the journal to Mrs. Ellinger, in which ſo many panegyrics were interſperſed, by her particular deſire, upon their new acquaintance, that it appeared to her too certain, her ill-judging friend, who had incurred the laſting diſpleaſure of her father for remaining unmarried in her youth, would now from caprice expoſe herſelf to ridicule and cenſure, by precipitating herſelf into an alliance with a young man, whoſe prevailing motive could not be perſonal attractions; for thoſe of Miſs Beauclerc were on the wane, as ſhe did not reſemble thoſe evergreen ladies who flouriſh, and bloom, and look divinely beautiful *ad libitum*, until the feebleneſs of extreme old age renders the trouble of adorning for conqueſt too painful a taſk. Neither could it be any characteriſtic excellence, which could not have been diſcovered when the ſudden purſuit of Oberne began; though Roſella feared he had very early perceived her foibles.

Suppoſing

Suppoſing her ſurmiſes to be juſt, there was a meanneſs in the conduct of this young man, which his manners and character of countenance entirely contradicted; but they did not render his deportment leſs diſguſting, by ſtamping it with hypocriſy, and Roſella conceived a prejudice againſt him, which ſucceſsfully combated the impreſſion his eaſy good humour, his aſſiduity, and pleaſing vivacity had made.

Miſs Beauclerc ſoon recovered ſufficiently to walk in a ſmall paddock behind the houſe, into which Roſella and Nancy ſupported her, where the gentle freſhneſs of the air, and the ſweetneſs of the verdure reſtored her ſtrength and ſpirits.

The ſecond time ſhe was thus exerciſing herſelf, Mr. Oberne, without any previous notice, made his appearance, and was delighted to witneſs her convaleſcence: he took her hand with the freedom and cordiality of an old friend, and ſupplanting Nancy in her poſt, rattled away with ſuch gaiety and rhodomantade, that even Roſella could not refuſe the ſmile he fought to raiſe. He informed the ladies that in his firſt deſpair at being deprived ſo cruelly of their ſociety, he had many temptations to fly to the depths of ſcience for relief, and enter himſelf in the Univerſity of Glaſgow: but that fortunately he recollected ſome lines importing the vanity of books, or wit, or wiſdom to relieve an oppreſſed heart, and truſting to the experience of others, he ſuffered his ſpleen to take its courſe, which carried him per force on the banks of the Clyde back to Lanerk, and had there left him under ſuch a concourſe of pleaſant images, that at the entrance of the paddock he had almoſt fancied himſelf mounting the wings of the wind, and directing

directing the gentleſt zephyrs to ſalute his convaleſcent friend.

Miſs Beauclerc was not diſpleaſed with this flouriſh; but as his ſpirits were rather too violent to agree with her ſtill enfeebled ſtate, ſhe was obliged to ſhorten her walk, and Mr. Oberne had the mortification of dining alone. Again he eſtabliſhed himſetf in the apartment he had quitted, and as Roſella now thought it would be impertinent to oppoſe his eaſy familiarity of intercourſe, ſhe endeavored to behold it with as much unconcern as poſſible: and it was the leſs difficult to ſubdue her diſcontent, as his deportment to herſelf was marked with conſideration and reſpect.

The principal object for which this unfortunate expedition to Lanerk had been undertaken, which was to ſee the falls of the Clyde, Mr. Oberne prevailed with Miſs Beauclerc not to give up before ſhe returned to Glaſgow; and on the fourth day from his renewed reſidence in the houſe, ſhe ventured thither in a chaiſe, which he took care to examine;—and as the diſtance was only two miles, he walked by the ſide of it—an exerciſe Roſella would willingly have partaken, but that ſhe avoided every appearance of encouraging the advances he evidently made to overcome her reſerve.

The fall that firſt preſented itſelf to the view of the party, which is by far the moſt ſtriking and conſiderable one, inſpired Miſs Beauclerc and her young companion with an aſtoniſhment and awe, that deprived them of utterance: it is not formed of one current only, deſcending amidſt the rocks, but poſſeſſes the violence and extent of accumulated ſtreams, daſhing with wild fury from one rugged point to another, and

at

at length pouring in a foaming torrent into the yawning abyſs.

" What a delicious ſpot," thought Miſs Beauclerc, " for a heroine to wander to at dewy eve, and the ſtill hour of night!"

She had quitted the chaiſe, and Oberne was now at her ſide, ſupporting her unaſſured ſteps, whilſt Roſella haſtily preſſed forward to ſatisfy with more expedition than her friend could uſe, the ardent admiration and curioſity that had taken poſſeſſion of her. In ſilence ſhe gazed, and, in the plenitude of enthuſiaſm for the ſublime and wonderful, felt not the *vacuum* which it is ſaid the moſt perfect object will leave in the mind, if the gazer cannot exclaim to another, " How divine this is!" Roſella, on the contrary, forgot for the moment that ſhe was not alone, and leaving her guide far behind, followed the firſt path that chance directed, and with a bounding ſtep flew onward, to devour the varied beauties which every inſtant diſcloſed themſelves.

Miſs Beauclerc ſaw her haſty geſture and rapid glance as ſhe darted out of ſight, with infinite pleaſure.—" Yes," cried ſhe, with internal exultation, " my Roſella will at length catch all the ſublimity and ardor of nymphs who can climb the Alps with exquiſite grace and agility, claſping under one delicate arm two complete ſets of Petrach and Metaſtatio, and under the other a lute."

She herſelf felt all the good will in the world to follow ſo charming an example, but was ſoon obliged even to relax her loitering pace, and ſeat herſelf on ſome moſſy turf, which, by extreme good fortune, offered itſelf when ſhe was quite exhauſted, to accommodate her weakneſs. Oberne then, at her requeſt, and in compliance with

with his own inclination, followed Roſella; but even with the aſſiſtance of a guide, it was near an hour ere he found her: for in the firſt effuſion of her delight, ſhe had incautiouſly left recollection to attain her as it might. Fortunately however, for her, ſhe did not find her mental illuſion laſt ſo long as is generally repreſented in caſes of ſimilar ſublimity: far from wandering unconſciouſly till the ſun had ſunk behind the towering cliffs, and left her in total darkneſs, ſhe felt her imprudence five minutes after ſhe had committed it, and endeavoured to return to her party—a taſk however, by no means eaſy to accompliſh, and ſhe had ſpent ſome very unpleaſant moments, when the voice of Oberne, hallooing her name in a tone that out-hectored the thundering of the torrent, relieved her anxiety, and ſhe ran towards the ſound.

"How pleaſed I am to ſee you!" exclaimed ſhe; "where is Miſs Beauclerc?"

"More than a mile from us; but you are ſo much charmed to ſee me, and I am ſo extravagantly delighted to have found you, that we ſhall think the way towards her very ſhort."

"Indeed I am much indebted to you," reſumed Roſella; "for I had quite loſt myſelf."

"What recompence ought I to claim for reſtoring you to your friend?" demanded he.

"I cannot determine," ſaid Roſella, ſmiling; "if the ſervice is to be eſtimated at the value of the ſtrayed ſheep, and not at the time and trouble you have thrown away, I am afraid you will be ill rewarded: but I ſuppoſe the thanks of Miſs Beauclerc will be all the recompence you will ſolicit."

"No, Madam, I never ſolicit thanks; but I have the temerity to entreat, that the next time you

you are disposed to send me to Glasgow, or elsewhere, you will first reflect if you may not have occasion to employ me as a shepherd's cur, or in any other respectable character, as circumstances may occur."

This was said in a tone of mingled raillery and pique; for Oberne was rather offended that she should, by transferring the little service he had rendered her to the account of her friend, appear to aim equally at transferring the obligation.

Rosella was not unconscious of his lurking displeasure, but thought it prudent to notice it only as pleasantry, and, in his own style, told him, as it was impossible she could find him any employment of sufficient dignity to suit his merit, she should decline assigning him any.

"This is to say," retorted he, "whenever I volunteer my services unasked, like other officious people, I may content myself with deserving good-will without obtaining it."

"I hope," said Rosella more gravely, "I am not ungrateful; and Miss Beauclerc——"

"Miss Beauclerc," interrupted he, "is one of the best creatures in the world! If a poor fellow, who solicits her friendship, appears honest and well-meaning, she does not, like a cattish inquisitor, require other testimonials than a respect to decency and good manners."

"You have indeed little reason to complain of her too suspicious caution," replied Rosella; "but I fear, if she had found cause to repent her reliance upon your appearance as a gentleman and a man of integrity, from the little I have seen of the world, she would not have been consoled by its charitable commiseration."

"Oh

" Oh my God!" exclaimed Oberne, raiſing his hands in affected emotion, " defend thoſe unhappy frail dogs who are now in the nurſery, from your ſevere ſcrutiny, when you ſhall be armed with a rigid prudence of forty years ſtanding!"

They had now reached Miſs Beauclerc, who, on hearing the facility of their return, was extremely diſappointed that not one hair-breadth eſcape ſhould have graced ſo promiſing an adventure.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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